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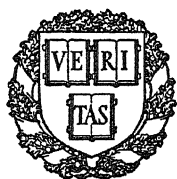
# THE TRAINING OF ENGLISH TEACHERS



THE TRAINING OF  
SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

ESPECIALLY WITH REFERENCE TO ENGLISH

REPORT OF A JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE  
FACULTY OF HARVARD COLLEGE AND OF  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

President James Bryant Conant,  
Harvard University

Sir,

The committee representing the faculty of Harvard College and the Graduate School of Education appointed by you in 1939 herewith submits its report on the training of secondary school teachers especially with reference to English.

In studying this problem the committee has been aided by many. Special mention should be made of the valuable services of Mr. C. R. Bragdon, who served for many months as a research worker for the committee and as its secretary, many of whose findings and suggestions make up the bone and sinew of this report; of Mr. Charles Swain Thomas, Associate Professor of Education Emeritus, who associated himself with the committee and gave it the benefit of his long experience in training high school teachers of English; and of the many high school teachers who, in person or by mail, aided the committee with their frank observations.

The committee acknowledges with much appreciation the help of the Commission on Teacher Education, of the American Council on Education. Dr. Karl Bigelow, Director of the Commission, evidenced his lively interest in the work of the committee by obtaining a grant from the funds at his disposal for certain expenses of the committee and for the publication of this report. Those who find the report of value are indebted to the General Education Board, sponsor of Dr. Bigelow's Commission, as well as to Harvard University.

Throughout most of its many months of deliberation the committee was under the chairmanship of Mr. Francis T. Spaulding, Dean of the Graduate School of Education. A few months before the termination of its labors, the committee lost Mr. Spaulding, who was called into service by the War Department. Mr. Theodore Morrison became acting chairman in his place; and Mr. Henry W. Holmes, Acting Dean of the Graduate School of Education, replaced Mr. Spaulding at the last moment on the committee. Mr. Holmes has signed the report for himself. The other members of the committee believe that there is nothing in the

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

report with which Mr. Spaulding would disagree and that his hearty concurrence in its conclusions would be given, were he able to finish his work with the committee.

Respectfully yours,

Theodore Morrison, *Lecturer in English, Acting Chairman*

Richard Mott Gummere, *Chairman of the Committee on Admission*

Henry Wyman Holmes, *Professor of Education, Acting Dean of the Graduate School of Education*

Howard Mumford Jones, *Professor of English, Chairman of the Division of Modern Languages*

Morris Bryan Lambie, *Professor of Government*

Arthur Meier Schlesinger, *Francis Lee Higginson Professor of History*

Robert Ulich, *Professor of Education*

Louis Cappel Zahner, *Lecturer on the Teaching of English*

February 20, 1942

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## INTRODUCTION

THE REPORT of this committee concerns the training of young men and women for teaching in the secondary schools of the nation. But in order that the discussion may not prove so nebulous as to evaporate in vague good will and the pious enunciation of general principles, the committee has made the focus of its activities the problem of training English teachers for secondary schoolwork. Among all the high school subjects, English is the most complex in the opinion of many because of its ramifications, because of the indefiniteness of its boundary lines and because "English" includes not only the substance of something to be taught but also the language in which teaching is carried on. The committee avers that its primary interest is secondary education in the United States; and this means in fact that its chief concern is with the public high school, inasmuch as the private preparatory schools, however excellent, admit but a small fraction of the total school population into their classes. It is against, and within, the whole secondary school problem, however, that the committee wishes to project its investigations into the training of teachers of English, in the belief that by considering so rich and important a branch of subject matter it can best illuminate the difficulties of the collegiate and academic world *vis à vis* the problem of teacher-training. The conclusions reached by the committee may not apply specifically to the training of teachers in the social studies or high school chemistry or physical education; indeed, they may not, in the opinion of many, apply to the training of teachers in English; but in so far as they are correct, the committee believes they may by inference be useful in considering the education of other sorts of high school teachers.

There are other preliminary considerations which make an investigation into the training of teachers of English expedient. One is the change which has come about in the concept of

"English" — something on which this report will have a good deal to say in its later pages. For the present it is important to note that as a classroom subject "English" was once thought of as possessing a clear-cut and generally acceptable content. It was also thought, or so at least advocates of change have charged, that "teaching English" meant the rote presentation of this content to whatever individuals happened to be grouped into a high school class. Such a philosophy of teaching English was, to be sure, never stated explicitly, nor was it consciously held by English teachers, but in the opening decades of the present century many English teachers performed as if they held this view. Strong traces of these earlier practices still linger. The committee does not hold that the earlier concept of English was all bad. It notes, however, that most English teachers today think that "English teaching" in this older sense of the phrase tended to abstract itself from the realities of school life. Those realities are practically incarnated in pupils. Therefore most English teachers now pay at least formal obedience to the apothegm that what they teach is not the subject but the pupil.

But the concept of "the pupil" is also abstract. It connotes an attitude which is not too unsatisfactory in periods of comparative stability, social, economic, and political, but it omits a consideration vital to pedagogical success in times of severe stress or rapid and unpredictable disaster. The "pupil" has no existence apart from society — apart, that is, from his home, his school, his town, and the larger society of the nation and, for good or ill, the world. The society in which the pupil lives affects the teacher in at least three ways: it plays a large part in making the pupil what he is; it determines the conditions among which teachers work; and it forms the starting point for the future state of society into which as an adult the pupil is to pass.

These simple considerations have profound significance for the college world under all circumstances, but particularly if it is to train teachers. For example, the high school pupil of today takes economic security less for granted than did the

pupil of twenty-five years ago — and yet it is from the pupils of twenty-five years ago that our present college faculties mostly come. The teacher cannot now assume that the same books taught by the method in use twenty-five years ago will appeal in the same way, and the college faculty ought not to suppose that such should be the case. Similarly, the village, the town, the city, the community condition the teacher's work. Taxpayers, for example, in a period of crushing taxation, will pay for, and expect, certain things from their schools, and will refuse to pay for, will refuse to expect, other things. No amount of oburgation from college faculties will alter this frame of mind. Finally, the society into which the pupil is to go affects the possible work of a teacher, who must decide what are likely to be the necessary skills and the desirable attitudes and values to be imparted to high school pupils, the rest of whose lives is to be spent in an unpredictable social future. College faculties cannot safely think of secondary education in terms of the high schools from which they came themselves.

These social and economic considerations basically affect the training of teachers. However noble the aims with which the college would like to imbue the future teacher, these aims must be adapted to pupils. Methods and materials estimable in theory are useless unless they are within the limits set by the caliber of the pupils, the equipment of the school, and the financial capacity of the taxpayers. Moreover, any program for the training of teachers must be based not on these considerations alone but also upon the caliber of the teachers themselves as they are attracted or repelled by the prospect before our secondary schools; upon the ability or promise of ability they display; and upon the capacity of the college to find out whether candidates have the right abilities.

This report therefore begins with some examination of the place of secondary schools in American society: the effects of existing conditions upon young people, the effects upon the schools, and the effects upon the quality of those now teaching.



# THE TRAINING OF ENGLISH TEACHERS



# I

## THE SOCIAL SETTING OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

**W**HAT are the most important facts among existing conditions in the secondary schools and in American society generally as these bear upon the work of the teacher and therefore upon the training of future teachers?

The picture is infinitely complex. Perhaps no known or half-guessed truth is wholly extraneous; perhaps, given infinite knowledge and sure insight, no fact of life today is entirely foreign to the task of understanding, teaching, and guiding young Americans. Our only practicable hope in dealing with so insoluble a problem is to enumerate some of the leading considerations which have affected the thought of the committee in considering the problem.

### A. HOW DO PRESENT-DAY CONDITIONS AFFECT PUPILS IN THE SCHOOLS?

No children now in secondary school remember a time which their elders spoke of as "good times" or "prosperous times." None of them remembers a time free from the possibility of war, or from war itself. "Peace," like "prosperity," is to them an abstraction having little or no basis in first-hand experience. Moreover, unemployment, the fear of losing the job, actual losing of the job, with consequent loss of faith in the existing economic order or even in democracy, — these have been experienced at first-hand by pupils either in their own homes or those of their friends. With defense production and a war economy making once more for less unemployment and higher wages, the pupils of today may naturally be ex-

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pected to think that comparative peace with unemployment and war *with* employment are the normal alternatives offered by our civilization.

Rapid change, uncertainty, insecurity have been the fare of the present generation of school children, who, nevertheless, like any other young people at any time, have deeply and mutely desired stability, security, and some reasonable future opportunity to get a job, and eventually a mate and a family. Yet this feeling of uncertainty is not without its compensations. It has been accompanied by a spirit of questioning and inquiry little known in the schoolrooms of a comparatively few years ago. This spirit of inquiry, rightly nurtured and guided, can become a great impetus to all learning. Pupils today are interested, many of them are intelligently interested, in whatever is presented to them as bearing upon the future of our civilization. They "have to be shown," it is true, but they are eager to learn.

Unfortunately, however, there is another element of the social scene, a powerful influence in the out-of-school development of pupils today, that must be reckoned with — and this is the mass-communication of the newspapers, magazines, movies, and (especially) the radio. The tendency of all of them, in part even the conscious effort of those responsible for these instruments, is to cajole and lull readers, onlookers or listeners into a permanent state of unquestioning receptivity; to prevent their becoming reasoning, critical beings; to standardize them as consumers of goods and of entertainment, and even to standardize them as voters, to make them eat, drink, wear, buy, believe, think, live and die alike. Perhaps the purveyors of mass-communication, sometimes spoken of as "amusements," or "occupations of leisure time," offer a sort of escape from the uncertainty and insecurity we have already mentioned. They *appear* to offer answers to the baffling questions that face young people today. The "success story," the barrage of advertising of nostrums to cure every ill real, imagined, or invented by the advertisers, and to allay every doubt, have undoubtedly a certain success. Conceivably,



movies and radio might be used as partners of the schools in educating adolescents for living in the world today. But at present they have also an opposite and dangerous effect. Such answers as they give are stereotyped, ready-made, and romanticized. In truth, they do not give answers, but anodynes, and they make the task of the schools, whose purpose it is to develop individual talent, even more difficult. Compared with the instruments of mass-communication in certain other countries, the American newspaper, radio, movies, and magazines are not standardized, but it would be misleading to avoid the fact that these instruments, from the point of view of an individualized citizenry, must be regarded as possibly creating, in all innocence, the kind of standardization which leads to an intellectual totalitarianism perhaps as dangerous as political totalitarianism and certainly more insidious, since those in control of these mediums are not publicly known, screened as they are behind the glamor of "names." But the truth that stereotyping is the deadly enemy of education in any true sense is never more applicable than in the case of young people in the amusement world of today.

Not all the social pressure upon the schools is evil; and the high school pupil of today, even in smaller communities, enjoys the benefits of social agencies which were either unknown or rudimentary a quarter of a century ago. His health is looked after by the school nurse and the school doctor; his diet is cared for in the school lunchroom; his free hours are spent on a supervised playground or as a member of a youth organization like the Boy Scouts; he goes back and forth through streets guarded by school policemen; and in various other ways American society looks after him. This work is necessary and advantageous, but it carries with it the defects of its qualities; and among these defects a principal one is a disinclination to vary from the mass. Individual prowess in athletics is admired, but it is excellence which mainly results from doing better what everybody else does in some degree; and, given the normal adolescent fear of disapproval, it would seem to be true that individual initiative in the moral or intellectual world

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receives little encouragement in the existing order of things. The popular phrase: "Why stick your neck out?" reveals a skein of tangled values. To get by, to conform in appearance, to avoid difficulty, to drift with the tide — all these are alleged to be characteristic of the psychology of the young. Doubtless conservatives misread the signs of the times in some degree, since there seems little reason to suppose that in an emergency American youth cannot rise to the occasion, but school life is not emergency, but routine; and, as Lord Bryce long ago pointed out, the individual American feels lost and helpless among the millions of his countrymen. There is no reason to suppose that this feeling has altered since *The American Commonwealth* was written, and unfortunately no reason to suppose that the rising generation of young Americans facing the draft has somehow miraculously thrown off a sense of fatality which sometimes appears as futility.

The impact of social conditions upon school pupils might be endlessly elaborated, but perhaps these few suggestions may compel the collegiate world to re-think some of its tacit assumptions about secondary education. We do not believe that the remedy for these evils is necessarily to insist upon courses in sociology and economics in a teacher-training program. We do not hold that the high schools should become mere social service agencies or psychiatric clinics. We do suggest, however, that the young teacher must somehow be made dramatically aware of the impact of society upon adolescent youth so that he can scrutinize teaching materials and methods in relation to the pupils who are actually before him in the classroom.

### B. WHAT ARE THE EXISTING CONDITIONS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS?

#### *The Pupils*

As we have already indicated, "the pupil" or "the average pupil" does not exist, and educational theory which is based upon this concept is based upon an abstraction. Pupils have always differed, but the differences among pupils in the sec-

ondary schools are greater and more striking at the moment than they have ever been before.

For one thing, the span of intelligence is greater, but unfortunately this diversity has meant a lowering of the norm. Larger numbers of less gifted pupils have come into the schools. As defined by ratings through intelligence testing, the group which constitutes the lowest third in the contemporary high schools would not have been in high school at all in 1910. Again, in smaller schools, or in schools in communities where the true meaning of a "democratic" education is mistakenly identified with uniformity of education, pupils are not grouped according to ability or interests. This can only mean that the prospective teacher must be prepared to handle large classes which contain both unusually able and unusually retarded pupils. Under any circumstances, the influx of less able pupils into the high schools has lowered the general level, so that any teacher aiming at the "middle" will be aiming at a standard considerably lower today than would the teacher of 1910.

There is a similar diversity in the immediate social and economic background of pupils. Roughly, 33% of the children of unskilled laborers enter high school, 60% of the children of semi-skilled laborers, and 93% of the children of skilled laborers or professional men. The children of unskilled laborers in high school are already numerically important, and have probably not as yet nearly reached their numerical peak, while it is clear that skilled laborers and professional men are already sending as many of their children to high school as they are likely ever to send. The motives of the different groups of children, and the desires of different groups of parents for their children vary widely. Thus the ordinary amenities of life — courtesy, etiquette, civil conversation — learned by some children in the home must be learned, if at all, by others in the school. Again, the interests of some pupils will be narrowly vocational; of others, cultural. It does not, however, follow that the vocational aim is to be associated only with the lower income group, or *vice versa*, but what is of first

importance is to see that the high school is caught between two forces; that it faces, on the one hand, the necessity of inculcating some part of our cultural inheritance in all its pupils, and on the other, the desirability of training an uncertain percentage of its patrons for industry, commerce, and agriculture.

Two other elements are important. The children of diverse race groups appear in many schools and cities, present special difficulties to teachers, and offer crucial problems to the operation of the school on a democratic basis. It is to the eternal credit of the American school system that it has steadily resisted racial prejudice. Nevertheless, it does no good to blind one's self to the fact that race prejudice is a mounting danger in the republic, and it is essential to observe that meeting this danger requires a high degree of educational skill. Teachers have occasionally found that well-meant programs intended to illustrate the virtues of a particular racial group in the interests of "understanding" have back-fired and increased the disease they were intended to remedy.

The second, and sadder, truth is that out of every 100 pupils who enter the ninth grade, 40 will drop out before graduation, and most of these 40 will complete less than two years of high school work. The connection of the American high school with the American college was once close, and the phrase "the people's college" was supposed to describe the high school. That connection becomes increasingly tenuous. The result is an increasing and deplorable social fissure for which the committee is helpless to suggest a remedy, but which must have its profound effect upon the future of the privately endowed college.

### *The Curriculum*

Partly because of the different motives and desires of the pupils and their families, which we have already mentioned, and partly because of other forces, many of them not easily traced, the objectives of the schools and the curricula growing from them are diverse and confused. Rapidly changing conditions have called for new methods and materials. Natural

conservatism has made for retention of traditional methods and materials. Experiment and tradition, because they have existed side by side in the same school, have often produced conflict and confusion. A consistent, consecutive program, new or old, has been difficult to achieve, and it is a rare pupil who has not been subjected to conflicting philosophies of education. This has, of course, always been the inevitable price of development and growth in the schools and is the normal and desirable state of affairs without which the schools could not escape stagnation. During the last ten years, however, there has perhaps been an unusually high amount of spasmodic and unrelated experiment, much of it ill-conceived. Too often experiment has come merely from a desire to be different and "up-to-date," a blind revolt against tradition.

This confusion shows itself not only within single fields, such as English, but in the total curriculum as well. Here public demand plays an important part. Two hundred different "subjects" are now listed as being taught in American schools. In any one school the number of different curricula open to a student may run as high as ten. Five is the average. This condition may be necessary and, in view of the diversity of pupils we have already spoken of, even desirable. It is clear, however, that it makes tremendously complex and important the work of guiding the individual pupil through the school.

Further to increase the complexity of the activities carried on by teachers, there is the extra-curricular program which the schools now offer to pupils. As the schools more and more become, by popular demand, organizations for general welfare and community service, more and more extra-curricular obligations are placed upon teachers. Few of these obligations have any bearing upon the intellectual side of education, and many of them cannot be called educational at all. A total of 231 such activities is now carried on in high schools.

### *The School and the Community*

Many of the conditions already described have as one of their causes the demands and desires of the public, the men

and women who pay the taxes and send their children to the schools. Other conditions are also almost wholly the outgrowth of public attitudes.

All of the limitations that arise directly or indirectly from inadequate school budgets must be attributed to the attitude of the public toward the schools; an attitude, we freely grant, made inevitable by economic conditions. Heading this list would be the low salary budget, making both for low-paid and consequently low-grade teachers, and for an inadequate supply of teachers; necessitating also large classes and a general overburdening of teachers beyond the point of highest efficiency. Next in importance is, perhaps, the inadequate supply of textbooks and books for school libraries. Teachers must teach what is in the book-closet. If the covers on the books will last another half dozen years, the pupils will have to put up with the texts.

American education faces a dilemma in this question of school budgets. It is a fair statement that the poorer a community, the greater in general is the complexity of its educational problem, and the greater the need for expert, well-planned and well-run schools. It is, however, exactly the communities that need high-priced education which can least afford it. The wealth of a community, it is only fair to state, is apparently no index of its willingness to pay for education. Mississippi, for instance, had until recently a total tax income so low that it paid 70% of it for education alone — certainly, evidence of willingness to pay. It could provide, however, only \$20.00 per pupil. New York state, on the other hand, spending only 25% of its tax income, provides \$80.00 per year per pupil.

In communities where economic conditions make low school budgets a necessity, most of the pupils go out from school to work on farms or in factories. In many of these communities, however, unskilled teachers go by rote through traditional text books introduced years ago in imitation of schools elsewhere which were preparing their pupils to enter college at a time when the polite hallmark of "culture" was the chief aim.

The "cultural heritage" of *Silas Marner* and *A Tale of Two Cities* is bravely and unquestioningly handed on in communities where they have only an "escape" value. The townspeople have come to have faith in them as somehow representing "culture" and "education," and wish to deny their children nothing that has, or had, the label "college preparatory."

The public exercises its influence in other ways. There is, for instance, a tacit understanding that most pupils will be promoted every year; that standards, therefore, will not be beyond the abilities of pupils in the lower intelligence group. A high school diploma is looked upon as the right of any American who can read and write, and who has the time and desire to go through the years of high school.

As less able children come into the school, as the pressure of modern life causes more and more maladjustment among adolescents, and as more and more is learned about the normal and abnormal psychology of adolescents and about mental hygiene, there is an increasing tendency to consider the school a social-service agency whose primary responsibility is the psychological health of the maladjusted pupil. Most communities cannot, or do not, provide other agencies to care for the many non-academic needs of their children. Extreme cases, verging upon, or actually becoming, delinquency or insanity, may be taken care of outside the school. But the task of discovering and treating maladjustments in time to prevent delinquency or insanity falls largely upon the teacher, and is in fact one of his gravest responsibilities. It is not so much a matter of the public having demanded this service, as of educators having been the first to see the need of it. The public has not yet made adequate provision to meet this need, and it has not yet provided the schools with the budgets necessary for an adequate solution of the problem within the schools. Classroom and subject teachers, in consequence, have found more and more of their time, energy, and professional study directed away from guiding normal pupils in intellectual pursuits and toward dealing with maladjusted pupils, many of whom are temporarily incapable of intellectual pursuits.

The public is most directly represented through its boards of education, whose business it is to see that the schools are run as the public wishes them run. In many towns and cities the school board is made up of informed laymen well qualified for the post. In far too many others, however, it is not. In certain communities members of the school board seem to hold, as their only educational philosophy, "what was good enough for me is good enough for my children." Sometimes election to the school board is simply a political stepping-stone to bigger and better public offices. The boundaries between the duties of a school board and those of school administrators are not clearly defined or honestly respected in many communities, with the result that boards frequently interfere with the actual running of the school, generally with no long or clear view of the welfare of the pupils in mind. Appointment to the teaching or administrative staff is not infrequently used for political or personal ends.

Pressure groups also exert an influence upon the schools. In an industrial community, for instance, factory owners may exert pressure in favor of extensive vocational training of a sort likely to be useful to industrialists, while labor leaders, not anxious to increase the competition for jobs or to lose control over apprenticeship, may oppose vocational training. Similarly, pressure groups, behind one stalking horse or another, are constantly trying to exercise censorship over textbooks and the methods and materials used in the classroom. Many of them have dangerously good intentions.

### C. THE SITUATION OF THE HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

What of the teachers? What is the caliber of the young men and women who offer themselves for this most weighty and complex of professions? There is no doubt of the loyalty of teachers to their profession and to their pupils. Underpaid, overworked, restricted, teachers remain conscientious public servants. This alone, however, is not enough. The fact is that the profession is not attracting sufficiently able persons. Teachers available to high schools unfortunately show about



the same diversity and the same levels of ability and culture as the pupils they are to teach. Their scholarship is meager, their professional knowledge slight. And as we have pointed out above, the caliber of the teacher is likely to vary inversely with the difficulty and importance of his work, since depressed communities are not qualified to select nor financially able to employ teachers competent to handle their perplexing school situations.

The Carnegie Foundation found in Pennsylvania that "those who will teach are the average and below average minds that lack knowledge and therefore insight into the genuine learning processes; this holds in every subject field taught in high school as well as in general." Other general studies are equally eloquent of backwardness.

Thus a survey of the social attitudes of thousands of high school teachers all over the country made in 1936 found more than half disagreeing with the evolutionary hypothesis. Similarly, the National Examination given prospective teachers by the American Council on Education in 1940 disclosed that about one-sixth believed that planting periods are directly affected by the moon.

Natural endowment and general culture vary, but the common levels are likewise low. The Carnegie Study found prospective teachers showing up badly in tests of general culture in comparison with students four years below them, who represent the pupils they must be prepared to teach. One out of four high school seniors surpassed one out of four prospective teachers supposed to be fully prepared to go into the profession.

In brief, the great majority of high school teachers is not drawn from the more intelligent and more cultured element of our population.

This situation, combined with the increase in low-ability students admitted into high schools, makes for a descending spiral of educational standards. High school teachers come from high school graduating classes. Lacking any stimulating or substantial professional training, they look back upon their

own high school classes as their most vivid first-hand experience in education. They go back into the high school with the strong tendency of inertia to teach as they were taught. Drawn from the middle or lower groups of high school graduates, they teach a little less intelligently than they were taught; so that the generation they teach (the source of future teachers) will have a less able and brilliant example of teaching set for them. There is therefore grave danger that the schools will fall into a descending spiral. Less and less able teachers will teach to a mediocre middle of a class that constantly displays a lower and lower level of ability.

Notable exceptions to this dismal picture are, fortunately, not rare. Individual schools are excellent. Whole city systems, and perhaps even county and state systems, have escaped some or most of the ills we have described, and may serve as proving grounds or rallying points for better principles, materials, and methods of education. In the main, however, the conditions we have sketched are sufficiently widespread to be reckoned with by teacher-training institutions, if these institutions propose to send into the field teachers prepared to meet the actual situation, and to build on this situation a better education for the America of tomorrow.

Amid the conditions we have sketched, what kind of secondary education is possible? What kind is desirable? There is no general agreement, albeit a few leading principles may be tentatively set down, a few leading problems of interpretation may be outlined.

Everyone, for example, is likely to agree that the objects aimed at in secondary education must embrace ends which are desirable for the individual, but for an individual who is going to live in society; and that it must embrace ends which are desirable for society and which society may, with some justice, impose upon individuals. But to enunciate this truth is to enunciate a platitude to which all groups of educational theorists will immediately assent. The puzzle is how to carry into effect these grand and simple principles. And the dilemma of the committee is the dilemma of the American republic.

On the one hand, the "objectives" of secondary education do not require that a corresponding course or subject be taught for the precise purpose of achieving that end. Much mischief has been done, for example, by assuming that a course in civics is the pragmatic answer to the demand that the school teach civic virtue. The school is, and should be, wider than its curriculum or its extra-curricular activities. A pupil can learn all he needs to know about getting on with other people, provided that in his school pupils and teachers get along well together — no course in "human relationships" will do half as well. On the other hand, a school in which "education" is arbitrarily handed down from principal to teacher and from teacher to pupil is a poor school by any standard. Yet it is impossible to set forth a curriculum or to maintain a school without subject matter; and subject matter can, and should be, usefully divided into sensible component parts. What are the necessary component parts? The committee does not know.

The basis of civilization is not glib good will but information, pertinent and useful as well as moral and philosophic. It seems to us idle to dismiss the curriculum as the vestigial remnant of an obsolete educational theory in a period when society, becoming more technological, demands technologists, and, having created technology, must in turn find the wisdom and insight to control what it has created. To center the school upon the personality of the child is to make as fatal an error as it is to sacrifice the personality of the child to an arbitrary array of "courses." The salvation of American education does not lie in either extreme. The committee therefore avers that those in charge of secondary education are in duty bound to produce a program of component parts which both parents and the colleges can comprehend. The vague phraseology too common in educational circles (phraseology from which this report itself is not wholly free) is not a program, however well meant; and the committee is only too painfully aware how much educational discussion is carried on in language intended to conceal the absence of thought.

The committee agrees that American children should be

given opportunity to explore and develop their individual interests and abilities — intellectual, manual, artistic — so that each may, so far as in him lies, achieve a personal feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment. It believes that pupils of unusually high ability, once their talents are discovered, should be expected to develop that ability to the height of its bent. So far, with reference to the individual, the committee cheerfully goes. But the responsibilities of the individual to the society which has nurtured him are equally urgent, and the committee is not of opinion that the school has fulfilled its function when it has produced a small group of individuals who view their own attainments with flattering self-regard. It has no patience with class and caste distinctions. It believes that every pupil should be prepared to recognize the truth that duties and obligations require the immolation of selfish individual interests. The inculcation of a deeper reverence for the liberal state, a greater patience with the imperfections of the democratic process, and a far greater readiness for self-sacrifice are imperatively demanded as objects of education in American schools. One of the uses of English to which the committee turns with hope is that this subject (not excluding others) can be far more useful as a means of inculcating responsibility than the advocates of "appreciation," "creative writing," and the like emotional aims are prepared to admit.

The committee says nothing about vocational training. In the first place, it is evident that the high schools, whether they wish to or not, are becoming places of vocational training. In the second place, the whole problem of vocational training is a complex matter, involving intricate questions of the economic balance or imbalance of the community and of the nation, the ability to prophesy what trades and skills are going to demand recruits, the creation of skilled teachers, the question of equipment and support, the relation of the school to industry and labor, problems of guidance, and much else. Adequately to discuss the problem would prolong this report indefinitely. The committee holds, however, that no curriculum should be merely or meanly vocational; and in the belief

that the son or daughter of the workingman is entitled to an appropriate part of his cultural inheritance no less than the child of the banker, it turns now to the question of "English" in the secondary schools. Perhaps the concept of "English" may offer a solution to the problem of reconciling some of these conflicting educational aims.

## II

# CONFUSION OF AIMS IN HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH

**B**UT the concept of "English" considered as an end in itself, as a means of continuing the cultural heritage of American youth, as an offset to vocational training, or as a reconciliation of the demands of individualism and the rights of society is a concept offering many difficulties at the secondary school level; and it is well to discuss these confusions.

Perhaps the first difficulty confronting the inquirer is lack of agreement as to what is meant by "teaching English" in the secondary schools. Neither the denotation nor the connotation of the phrase is fixed. Theories, opinions, and practices vary between the public high schools and the private preparatory schools, the latter being generally more orthodox in their intentions, the former, for a variety of reasons, being certainly more experimental in their attitude and perhaps more confused in their thinking. Among educators and among English teachers opinions run from the theory that the teacher is solely or mainly concerned with improving oral and written English and the comprehension of certain standard literary works, to the point of view expressed in a recent article in *The English Journal*:

During the past year . . . I have given individual instruction to high-school students who still don't know what a sentence is. I have also directed the Sophomore class in a production of *Macbeth*. I have planned English courses which relate to units in social studies and human relations and have led discussions which run the whole gamut of human experience. In the same day I have explained the differences between Petrarchan and Shakespearean sonnets and have helped students plan an actual radio broadcast on the subject 'What is an American?' In the course of the year I have read and criticized poems about thwarted love,

short stories about Polish farmers caught in the war zone, research papers about topics such as 'Salt in American History,' 'The Matanuska Valley,' 'Cosmic Rays,' and 'Isadora Duncan.' I have advised the staff of the Senior yearbook, composed vocabulary lists, conducted units on narrative poetry and social problems in the American theater; shown film excerpts of the Commission on Human Relations of *Dead End*, *Alice Adams*, *Cavalcade*, dealing in that order with juvenile delinquency, wall flowers, and the way mothers feel about war.

I have also undertaken to estimate by means of original evaluation instruments whether student appreciation is developed more by reading a modern play than by reading a Shakespearean drama and what effect, if any, the *Merchant of Venice* has upon attitudes of Christians towards Jews.

Extracurricular activities have included the teaching of public speaking in adult night classes, participation in panel discussions at educational conferences, umpiring baseball games. . . .

And now the semanticists ask us what we are doing about the teaching of meaning. If the English teachers are not going to teach semantics, who will? If the English teachers are not going to coach plays; make speech recordings of pupils' voices; teach parliamentary procedure, motion picture and radio appreciation, discrimination in reading magazines, remedial reading, spelling, creative writing, journalism, literary criticism, library skills, etc., who else will?

The writer from whom these extracts are made is not complaining of an undue burden; on the contrary, he concludes: "We need not worry if the reading, writing, or speaking transcends prescribed subject fields, leads to considerations of anything and everything." \* However, such versatility is not common, and the difficulty of setting up specific teacher-training programs is increased rather than lessened if we assume that the English teacher is to be multiplied as a kind of Admirable Crichton of the secondary schools. In general, specific training for specific jobs is still desirable in the educational world.

\* Robert J. Cadogan, "What is English For?" *The English Journal*, October, 1940, pp. 626-31.

*What is Meant by "English"?*

What is the specific job of the English teacher? Even if one sticks to the conventional interpretation, one finds the question is extraordinarily confused. Most persons would agree in general that the teacher "teaches English" in the sense that he or she is supposed to improve the written and oral language of pupils, but there is profound disagreement as to the implications of the assumption. There are those, for example, who argue that watch over the written and oral language of high school pupils is not the peculiar duty of the English teacher, but the duty of all. The slogan "every teacher a teacher of English" perhaps originated in the excellent idea that speech habits cannot be made nor mended in a single class hour by a single teacher. From this sound educational premiss, however, fallacious inferences have sometimes been drawn. The general injunction laid upon high school faculty members to check slovenly speech and writing is part of the general duty of all civilized adults and resembles the general duty most of us feel to check any tendency toward lapses from good manners in the young. Does it mean, however, that the English teacher is unnecessary? What is the special contribution the English teacher is to make? Is he, for example, to school his colleagues in good English? Is he to "correct" some or all of the papers written in other classes, in addition to any that may be written in his own class? Is the English classroom to be regarded as a speech infirmary for the cure of more chronic or more violent cases of illiteracy, from which the patient is happily to escape after good signs of amendment? Or does the injunction mean, as it has been practically made to mean in certain schools, the disappearance of the English staff altogether? All these developments have been discussed or tried. But if the English teacher is to disappear because his functions are to be generally distributed over the high school faculty, there is of course no need of any teacher-training program in the subject.

If, however, one supposes that the English teacher, because of his special knowledge, is primarily charged with the duty



of improving written and oral language, disagreement still appears. What is the proper instrument for this improvement? A revolt against "formal grammar" has been widespread, somewhat to the dismay of parents and of foreign language teachers who find that a technical vocabulary of grammatical terms has disappeared. "Formal grammar" has been replaced by "functional grammar" or, in extreme case, by no grammar at all in customary senses of the word. If, however, "formal grammar" is to disappear, and if the teacher is to be trained to understand the historical origins and linguistic significance of "functional grammar," only a sound knowledge of the history of the English language can save the teacher from much specious "functional grammar." Yet there is widespread sentiment against philological courses as part of the curriculum in teacher-training, albeit a course in the "history of the English language" is sometimes desiderated. It would take us too far afield to discuss the problem whether a course in the history of the English language without adequate philological preparation is truly possible; suffice it to say that until secondary school authorities make up their minds about what they want in the way of "grammar," it is difficult to know how to shape the linguistic requirements of a teacher-training program.

*"Writing" in the High School*

The public at large inclines to believe that a high school graduate who cannot spell correctly and who cannot write simple discourse with reasonable correctness has not received good instruction in English. Here again one faces a somewhat complex situation. Let us consider the problem of spelling. The teaching of spelling has been of considerable interest to educational psychologists, who have devised various tests and devices excellent for high school pedagogy. "Spelling" as such is not of direct interest to college faculties in English, for the reason that, from the historical point of view, spelling is not an end in itself but the result of a variety of philological and typographical forces. For secondary schools the result of this

situation is a paradox. Contemporary spelling is conventional. If it is to be mastered, it must be learned like the multiplication table or the habit of dressing. For this purpose no special linguistic training is needed by the prospective teacher. But the rationale of spelling (like the rationale of the dictionary) is truly explicable only in historical terms, which, if they are to have meaning to the teacher, must be studied in the light of the morphology and the phonology of the English language; yet it is precisely against the "drill" and discipline of philological learning that most educators and most English teachers revolt. The issue is not whether the English teacher shall transmit to her high school pupils a watered-down version of philological learning; the issue is whether for high school purposes it is proper and necessary to equip the English teacher with a kind of learning that, at first glance, seems remote from the interests of his job. Deeper lies the problem whether it is important for education and for the national culture that the question of speech and the speech arts shall be approached conventionally or historically; and until the school authorities themselves are clear in their own minds as to what they want, the perplexities of teacher-training will not decrease.

That high school graduates ought to write with a certain simple correctness is, at first sight, a platitude. Debate begins, however, the moment the meaning of "writing" is explored. On the one hand, the demand is universal that high school graduates shall be trained to write "grammatically" and clearly in the popular sense of "grammar" and in an acceptable sense of "clarity." To write correctly does not in itself imply the acquisition of "literary" virtues. On the other hand, a large and articulate body of educational theorists and of high school English teachers seems to be of opinion that the primary purpose of "writing" is the release of "creative activity," arguing that training in correctness follows upon the release of this activity, and not the other way around. This theory has a certain value, but its supporters sometimes appear so convinced of the value of creative activity *per se* that they grow impatient with the dull drill of syntax, "grammar," punctuation,

mastery of paragraph structure and the like. Has teaching English in the secondary schools achieved one of its principal aims if most of the pupils write little poems? Has it achieved its aims if most of the pupils write "correctly"? There ought to be no real opposition between these two demands, but in fact there is a deep division between two schools of pedagogy, a division which has important implications for teacher-training. If the emphasis in high school writing is to be on "creative activity," it is at least possible that customary college courses in composition are irrelevant to the teacher's professional interests and that for them an expert course in psychology should be substituted. If the primary purpose of high school writing is the widest possible spread of habits of correctness, then the training of the teacher should perhaps be directed towards methods of drill and discipline and towards simple problems of logic rather than to the evocation of individual outbursts of "creative activity." To be sure, creative activity which cannot shape itself into coherent sentences is futile. The high school theme which, however correct, is dull is likewise futile. To be sure also, there will always be some pupils inclined to imaginative writing, and probably there will generally be more pupils to whom any kind of writing is a painful chore. But the terms in which the problem of high school writing has frequently been discussed seem extraordinarily naive. The problem, in sum, is not whether one sort of futility is to be advocated as against another sort; the problem is what sort of training is needed for the teaching of writing. Until the school authorities are clear in their own minds whether the great mass of high school pupils need drill in simple writing, mainly expository, or whether they need "creative activity" as a lawful release for adolescent emotionalism, it is difficult to know how to shape this aspect of teacher-training.

### *"Oral English"*

There is presumably less disagreement about oral English, and one of the most honorable ambitions of high school teachers is to do something forward-looking about American

speech. This desire has two aspects. One is to improve the English spoken by the pupil, both in the sense of enriching the individual vocabulary and in the sense of improving pronunciation. The other aim, not unrelated to vocational training, is to give the pupil sufficient self-confidence to enable him to "talk on his feet" both as a pupil and as an adult. These aims are clear and laudable. However, as appears in the material quoted above, the English teacher is customarily charged with the supervision of the high school debating society, producing the school play, preparing assembly programs, drilling valedictorians, and other similar tasks. The production of plays requires one sort of training; the coaching of public speech requires a second sort; and the improvement of individual diction, together with the amelioration of speech defects, requires yet a third. As for the curing of speech defects, here is an area in which unskillful handling can do irreparable damage; and if the improvement of individual speech is to become a regular part of the English teacher's job, a considerable part of his training must be given over to special studies under experts. How many specialized jobs is the high school teacher expected to learn to do? There seems to be little agreement either among English specialists or among educational specialists as to the exact responsibilities of the teacher with respect to oral English.

### *English and Social Studies*

The improvement of language, oral or written, is of course not an end in itself. Good speaking and writing are but the outward and visible forms of thought, and the unsolved — perhaps the insoluble — problem of English teaching in this respect is the question: what shall the speaking and the writing be "about"? Few good teachers now content themselves with themes drawn from the literary classics or from the subjective impressions of their pupils. They prefer to take a wide range in order that high school speaking and writing may have as many contacts as possible with life itself — contacts which mean in fact the discussion of problems which are customarily

rated with the social studies. The drift of practice in this regard may be interestingly shown by comparing the program of the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1920 with that of the annual meeting of 1939. In 1920, when the association met in but two sections, the high school section discussed a paper on oral composition, one on imagination and speech, and one on experimentation by classroom teachers at one meeting; and papers on the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the American tradition, and nationalism and internationalism in another. In 1939 the association broke up into a number of sections, the topics of which included international relations, standards for motion pictures and newspapers, the radio, language and semantics, technological aids, journalism, English in the vocational schools, and various other matters. So far as this complexity represents a professional differentiation among teachers intended to fit them for special jobs it is, of course, to be welcomed. But if the English classroom is expected to deal competently, in theme or speech, discussion group or debate, with a list of topics advocated by the American Youth Commission, namely, "housing, conservation of natural and human resources, community planning, cooperatives, pressure groups and their methods of influencing legislation, the stock exchange, corporations, labor organizations, the industries of the nation, various forms of municipal government, governmental services such as those of the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, and Labor, the origin and nature of money and systems of exchange, international relations, consumers' needs and investments,"\* there will not only be no room in the classroom for ordinary work in literature and writing, but the education of future teachers of English will have to be so profoundly modified as to be unrecognizable as English training. The report in question does not say that the English teacher, and the English teacher alone, is to deal with these intricate topics; but, given the tendency to find

\* *What the High Schools Ought to Teach: The Report of a Special Committee Prepared for the American Youth Commission*, etc. Washington, D. C., 1940, p. 23.

the subjects of high school writing and speaking in civic, social, economic, and international problems, it would seem to follow that the English teacher faces a situation for which neither the English department nor the school of education can adequately prepare him. The need of an informed citizenry is obvious; and no one wishes to keep the burning issues of the day out of the high school. But it does not necessarily follow from these premisses that the English classroom should become so much a political forum for the discussion of public questions that it duplicates the work of the social studies room and ceases to make an effective contribution in its own right. There is a sense in which the simpler elements of debate and the simpler methods of research even into economic problems are within the competence and control of any intelligent adult, including the English teacher, but no one has so far thought through the important question: where is the line to be drawn between that kind of writing and speaking on public questions which the English teacher can manage competently, and that kind of writing and speaking on public questions which the English teacher, lacking adequate technical training in economics, sociology, and the like, can manage only incompetently? What is worse, incompetent teaching in certain fields may result in irreparable damage; or the English teacher, but hazily informed about economics, may conceivably encourage the spread of specious, false, or prejudiced economic biases among pupils who speak and write under his direction. Either the training of the English teacher must include a considerable amount of specialization in the social sciences, for which the present crowded program of teacher education has absolutely no room; or some well-defined safeguard, some limitation must be put upon his responsibilities for writing and speaking "about" contemporary social problems.

### *Extra-Curricular Activities*

If there is pressure to extend the range of English teaching into contemporary social problems, there is also pressure to extend the responsibility of the English teacher for extra-

curricular activities to an unwarranted degree. Witness after witness appearing before the committee testified that, however worthy the object of these extra-curricular activities (which include the debating society, the drama club, the school paper, the school annual, the high school assembly program, the management of the school library, "cooperation" with the library, the motion picture theatres, the radio, and the music store — the list is endless), so much time and energy go into this sort of work as to impair classroom teaching and abolish private study, not to speak of rest and recreation. It would furthermore appear to be true that the English teacher has been expected to take on more than his fair share of this kind of work. That high school clubs are praiseworthy and fulfill an excellent purpose is indisputable; the problem in teacher-training which the present situation causes is two-fold: what kind of professional preparation, if any, is needed for this responsibility? Where does the responsibility of the English teacher *qua* English teacher begin and end? Some educational reformers deprecate calling these enterprises "extra-curricular activities" and would "integrate" them with the formal high school program. This, however, merely intensifies the issue. In some degree an understanding of adolescent youth is required of all secondary school teachers. But because of the more personalized relation between teacher and pupil arising from English work (the writing of themes, the appreciation of poetry, and the like), it is supposed that the English teacher is especially the person for certain kinds of extra-curricular tasks — a supposition which receives added support from the fact that the drama, the library, and such writing tasks as the school paper and the school annual present are "English" materials. No one, so far as the committee can determine, has yet discovered where the line is to be drawn, what form of preparation for this important task can be wisely made a part of a training program which is already too complex, or whether the larger high schools (and perhaps in time the smaller) may not eventually add to their staff one or more persons specially trained for this sort of work.

What is true of extra-curricular activities is, in a general sense, also true of what is vaguely called "guidance." Guidance may mean either educational and vocational guidance or individual counselling about personal and domestic problems. The reason the English teacher has often been thought of in connection with the "guidance program" again arises from the more personalized relation between teacher and pupil supposed to be a valuable part of English teaching. That the experienced English teacher often may, and always should, give wise counsel is a proposition open to no argument. But "guidance" is, or ought to be, something dependent upon careful psychological training, and once again one faces the truth that there is but so much time in any teacher-training program. It seems to your committee hopeless to expect that the English teacher shall *especially* take on "guidance" as part of his professional duties. The committee believes that "guidance" should be either the field of the high school principal or of some person specially trained and designated for the task.

### *The High School and Literature*

It will be remarked that so far nothing has been said about what is, in the opinion of many, the most important task of the English teacher, namely, his responsibility for introducing his pupils to the world of books; and it is a proof of the complexity of the problem before the committee that, in this enumeration of the elements in that problem, the question of the English classroom *vis-à-vis* the printed word should be so long postponed. A brief historical summary is perhaps the quickest way to put the elements of the problem before the reader.

According to the influential bulletin on the *Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools* compiled by a committee headed by James Fleming Hosic and issued in 1917,\* the knowledge of literary masterpieces for their own sake was first introduced as a college entrance requirement by Yale Univer-

\* Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1917, No. 2, Washington: Government Printing Office, 1917. The material on the history of the study of English is on pp. 11-16.



sity in 1894.\* It became general in the nineties, a decade which also saw a movement designed to set up a uniform list of entrance requirements in English for the guidance of secondary schools. Such a list was compiled by the National Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English and was accepted as satisfactory by the College Entrance Examination Board, which began its work in 1901.\*\* It is to be remarked that such uniformity as this list of classics represents \*\*\* was a uniformity, for better or worse, created by the colleges rather than by the secondary schools; and it is to be remarked also that such changes as have been made in the list have been, with few exceptions, additive rather than subtractive. During the next decade the college entrance list of literary classics seems to have been reasonably satisfactory, though complaints were made; but these complaints so increased in volume that by 1917 the pamphlet entitled *Reorganization of English in Secondary Schools* became the expression of a movement of change originating in the secondary schools. The preface to this pamphlet and certain pertinent passages in its opening pages sufficiently express the spirit of the new reform:

The high school is rapidly becoming a common school. This is what it was first planned to be, and this is what the people seem now determined to make it. From that point of view the folly of insisting that the high school course in English shall be a college-preparatory course is evident . . . college-preparatory work in English never has prepared for college. College men freely confess that they make no attempt to base their courses upon what the high schools are supposed to have done, and, more significant still, boys and girls brought up in high schools free from the domination of the college-entrance ideal very frequently surpass

\* This is an accurate summation of the report. However, the *Forty-eighth Annual Report of the President of Harvard College* (Cambridge, 1874) shows that as early as 1874 Harvard College had laid down some interesting requirements in English, including plays by Shakespeare and novels by Scott and Goldsmith (p. 48).

\*\* *The Work of the College Entrance Examination Board, 1901-1925*. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1926.

\*\*\* The list of "high school classics" as it existed in 1928 can be consulted in W. Q. Norton, *Entrance English Examinations Set by the College Entrance Examination Board, 1901-1928* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1929), Sec. Ed., pp. xiii-xxvi.

their classmates who were carefully pointed toward the college examination. The entire doctrine of "preparation" for higher institutions is fallacious. . . . (p. 5)

It seems clear that the public high schools of the United States will soon be free from any influence tending to a rigid, quantitative course of study. There is the greatest need, therefore, of sober consideration of the high school course by those who are directly responsible for it. (p. 16)

[The committee of inquiry set up] represented every part of the country in proportion to the high school population and . . . all the members were concerned with public education. This is in striking contrast to all committees that had previously made reports on the subject of high school English. (p. 18)

[At a conference in 1911] it was pointed out that the growth of public high schools had led to a clash between the purpose of educating the children of the many for life and life's occupations and the preparation of the few for entrance to the privately endowed colleges with their traditional courses for general culture. The definite entrance requirements of the colleges and the examinations based upon them were felt by many to be hindering the high schools from adapting their courses to the needs of their own communities and were tending to highly formal and profitless methods of instruction. (p. 20)

The prevailing mode [of organization of high school English] was to distribute the college entrance books through the four years, with no general agreement as to the locus of any, and to carry on written composition in close connection with the study of these books, giving a single credit for all kinds of English work at the close of each term. (p. 22)

The committee's report was of course concerned not merely with literature in the high school but with all aspects of high school English; nevertheless the foregoing extracts are pertinent at this point because they illustrate the fact that the existence of a list of "college entrance requirement" classics in the first two decades of the century also conditioned much high school composition. It has already been shown that the kind of writing done in the secondary schools has changed; it will therefore be supposed that the kind of book customarily read by pupils may have likewise altered, and this is true.

Nevertheless, despite the vigor of the passages quoted above,

the committee of reform seemed at first glance to have done nothing very revolutionary with respect to the high school reading list. It distributed a number of the standard selections among the seventh, eighth and ninth grades (junior high school) and the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades (senior high school) in accordance with what seemed to be the difficulty of the selections in reference to the maturity of the pupil, and this reform was unanimously approved then and has been approved since. However, the desire to show that literature is a going concern, together with the desire to meet the needs of a wide variety of pupils, also led the committee to add to the classic the contemporary; and thus the "suggestive lists of books for study and general reading" in grade X, for example, was made to include not only recent works of some literary merit like S. Weir Mitchell's *Hugh Wynne* but also such ephemeral or sentimental books as *The Wood Carver of Lympus* and *The Winning of Barbara Worth*. Among the non-fiction similarly listed for reading are such titles as Collier's *Germany and the Germans*, General Funston's *Memoirs of Two Wars*, Morris's *Stage Life* and Sullivan's *A Woman Who Went to Alaska*, titles which not only suggest some interesting reflections upon the validity of contemporary judgments on books but also raise the query whether reading such volumes is actually no different from reading Jane Addams's *Twenty Years at Hull House* or Stevenson's *Vailima Letters*, which were also on the list. In general, however, the Hoxic recommendations confined such titles to individual reading; titles suggested for classroom study were chosen from the literary classics. There was apparently no confusion in the committee's mind between the notion of private reading and the notion of studying acceptable works within the great historic tradition of literature in English.

Associated with the college entrance board requirements in reading had been the so-called "restricted" examination; i.e., an examination designed to discover whether pupils had mastered the content and the significance of a certain selected number of literary classics. In 1931 a commission on English,

set up by the College Entrance Examination Board, issued an elaborate volume entitled *Examining the Examination in English*.<sup>\*</sup> After an exhaustive study the commission recommended the substitution of a "comprehensive" examination \*\* for the so-called restricted examination, having in mind not only the superiority of this type of examination as a test of individual ability, but also the consideration suggested in the following excerpt from their report:

The Comprehensive Examination in English has the special merit of placing upon the schools the responsibility for the selection of material to be studied and read. The Commission, having great respect for the judgment of the English teachers of our public and private schools, feels that these schools should themselves decide upon their own curricula . . . the Board is primarily concerned with but three major qualifications in students — an adequate literary background, ability to comprehend the printed page, and power to think and to express the evolved thought in correct and effective English.\*\*\*

So well-considered a document as *Examining the Examination in English* was bound to be influential, but as our immediate concern is not with the theory of examinations but with the problem of literature in the high school, it is to be observed that the weight of this volume was thrown in a direction away from the colleges. High school teachers were to select books to be read, not, it was hoped, without reference to the colleges, but certainly not at the instigation of college professors. High school English departments might seek advice from professors of English, but they were not bound to follow it.

### *English and "Correlation"*

The Hoscic report had left the literary classics still holding the main position in the classroom. The National Council of Teachers of English, however, in a series of influential reports

\* Harvard University Press, 1931. Charles Swain Thomas was the chairman of the committee.

\*\* Although the language of the paragraph is correct, it should be noted that the "comprehensive" examination had already come in, that the committee wisely recognized the fact, and that by 1936 the "restricted" examination was gone.

\*\*\* P. 213.

issued in the thirties \* ended whatever classroom monopoly the classics still enjoyed. In the name of an "integrated" curriculum, a "core" curriculum, or an "experience" curriculum, the test whereby a book was to be included in high school English study was not primarily whether it was a leading literary classic, but whether it could be fused with an immediate interest of the pupil, of other parts of the curriculum, or of society at large. Excellent as is the intent of dealing with literature in a setting of life, these reports seem to exhibit a decreasing power of discriminating between books of permanent worth and books of ephemeral nature, books which are literature and books which are not. Indeed, for some theorists the notion of literary judgment in the situation is in fact valueless, since the English classroom is but to reflect the interests of other parts of the curriculum, notably the social studies; and since in the opinion of many it is more important to get pupils to read anything than it is to insist that they shall read the best. Undoubtedly the teaching of literature at the secondary school level has suffered in the past from a mechanical clinging to an arbitrary list of "classics," many of which had little or no appeal to adolescence or to the teachers of adolescence, and a revolt was humanly desirable. This movement of revolt has been in action for a couple of decades; it has not wholly dislodged the classics, but it has created a great deal of confusion as to what kind of book is the best kind of book for high school English. Many schools retain classics from the old list because it is easy to keep them in stock; many schools use anthologies on historical principles, at least in their upper grades; many schools use anthologies which have only a remote connection with historical principles and in which recent and contemporary selections greatly outnumber the "standard" selections; many schools depend to an increasing degree upon the school library or the city library; many schools place more emphasis upon individual reading than they do upon acquaintance with standard authors; many schools use

\* *An Experience Curriculum*, 1935; *A Correlated Curriculum*, 1936; *Conducting Experiences in English*, 1939; *Educating for Peace*, 1940.

current magazines, newspapers, digests, and the like material where formerly the standard authors would have been employed; and in short there seems to be at the moment no common denominator, no generally agreed on concept of what sort of book it is the proper business of the high school to teach.

The general argument has been two-fold: first, the list of books to be read should be "broadened"; and second, work in the English classroom should be integrated with other parts of the pupil's training, the integration being into "units" of "experience." Hence, a "core" curriculum is a curriculum which, as it were, cuts across subject-line boundaries. The committee has no desire to argue the vast educational question here involved, nor does it question the intent of the reform. So far as high school reading is concerned, however, "broadening" has proved to be a nebulous concept. If the original list of high school classics was too narrow, "broadening" that list was, to be sure, necessary, but "broadening" in fact has been a process of moving farther and farther away from the original concept of high school books towards a limit which forever moves ahead; and when one finds the professional organization of English teachers setting up as equally proper for high school study *Hamlet*, Hugh Miller's *Old Red Sandstone*, the writings of Mr. Richard Haliburton, and the essays of Eddington, it is difficult to understand what test of difficulty, what test of literary merit, or what test of appropriateness is being used. And in the second place, an English curriculum which is "correlated" with other parts of the curriculum runs some danger of a one-way correlation; i.e., other subjects do not seem to show the same zest for correlation as is displayed by English, the result being that the concept of English literature melts away, whereas the concept of science or of social studies continues to endure and to increase.

### *The Problem of Reading*

The older notion of a *corpus* of standard high school readings has therefore disintegrated under a variety of impacts,

among which should be included the sincere, if somewhat exaggerated, sense of civic responsibility among English teachers themselves. There is, however, another important element in the situation which has helped to create chaos. Until the end of the last century it was generally supposed that the reading habit, like an interest in painting or music, once it was inculcated, would inevitably grow, feeding itself upon a wider and maturer interest in masterpieces, precisely as the ability to play the sonatinas of Clementi was supposed to lead to the desire of playing the sonatas of Beethoven. This aspect of cultural growth still lingers among teachers, and appears in professional publications under the guise of "opening doors on literature" or similar polite phrases. A more exact knowledge of educational psychology, however, together with the empirical truth that high school graduates do not in large numbers solace themselves with literary masterpieces in after years, has weakened this theory. Many persons expert in education now not only incline to doubt whether the same *corpus* of literary material can be taught to everybody; they also incline to believe that for large numbers of pupils teaching the classics, by making reading "hard," may do more harm than good. In addition, researches into the psychology of reading have revealed so wide a variety of attainment (or lack of attainment) among pupils as to make wholesale instruction in standard literature appear difficult or impossible. The central problem before the English teacher presently becomes the dilemma: is he principally a teacher of reading or is he principally a teacher of literature?

The twentieth century has seen a vast alteration in American culture with respect to the printed page. Until a few decades ago reading was a principal amusement of one's leisure time. Scott, Dickens, Henty, and the dime novel offered the kind of entertainment that is now sought elsewhere. But reading in the twentieth century has powerful rivals which have almost dethroned it as the king of entertainments. The rise of the comic strip (and the dissolution of this strip into underworld melodrama comparable to the old dime novel) furnishes for

thousands upon thousands of children their principal daily entertainment. Close upon the exploitation of "comics" by the press and by cheap publishers came the moving picture, the phonograph, and the radio; and it is probably only a question of time when television will be as widespread as are these. In addition, the automobile has had its profound effect; and in peaceful times the characteristic American family, even in the country, no longer gathers around the lamp in the sitting room while someone reads out loud. Doubtless every age regards itself as culturally a little worse off than its predecessor; doubtless there is no good way of objectively determining whether reading habits are less widespread now in proportion to the population than they were in 1910. It is also true that the steady sale of inexpensive editions of the literary classics is as marked a characteristic of our age as is the pulp-paper magazine or the western film. Nevertheless, there is too much testimony to the decline of reading among the young for this testimony to be dismissed; and when investigation reveals that the sports section is the only habitual reading of hundreds of boys or that the girls principally read the society page and the advice to the lovelorn, it is evident that the question which concluded the foregoing paragraph is, indeed, the riddle of the Sphinx. Shall the high school teacher principally concentrate upon the teaching of reading as a defence of our civilization against an eye-minded but illiterate citizenry? And if the principal aim of English teaching is to be the defence, perhaps the spread, of the reading habit, what part do the familiar classics play in such a program? Is it sufficient to teach high school pupils "how to read the newspaper," meaning how to appraise the truth and honesty of the newspaper? Is it sufficient to recommend stories which are merely not too bad, in the hope that even the reading of drugstore fiction is better than the refusal to read at all? Whatever the ultimate answer to these inquiries may be, this multiplicity of purposes does not clarify the problem of teacher-training.

There is, to be sure, one type of clarification with which the committee cannot sympathize. There are those who argue



that since the colleges mysteriously require items from the "college entrance requirement" list to be read by pupils preparing for entrance, the high schools should, wherever there is sufficient demand, set up an "academic" course in literature principally composed of standard selections. The vast majority of high school pupils are not going to enter college and need not therefore toil through the literary classics. But this solution by dichotomy seems to the committee both unfair and perilous. It is unfair to the original purpose of the high school and to the original intent of the college entrance examination board, the task of which has been, in the words of one of its chairmen, "to break down the isolation of the schools and the isolation of the colleges and to bring them together into close and constant contact for the solution of their common problems." \* For over half a century the higher study of literature has been going forward in American universities and it has accumulated a vast store of literature and of information about literature available to anybody who wants it. The committee can think of no good reason why the majority of high school pupils should be cut off from so rich a portion of their cultural heritage merely because they are not going to college, and suggests that the problem is not solved by setting up a special reading course for the cultured few. We cannot afford to create a *samurai* class of intellectuals in the United States. Either literature, appropriately adjusted to varying levels of maturity, is of national importance or it is not. If it is of national importance, the issue before any teacher-training program would seem to be how to get literature before the eyes and into the mind and heart of as many young Americans as possible. Moreover, it is easy to make wrong judgments

\* *Work of the College Entrance Examination Board, op. cit.*, p. 6. Those who mistakenly regard this body as the organ of collegiate oppression should ponder President Butler's remarks about the suspicion which the board's activities aroused among the colleges: "Tucked away in almost every college faculty was at least one isolated teacher who felt sure that he knew more than anyone else in his field as to how the college admission subject should be stated and what kind of examination should be held upon it. It took ten or fifteen years to shell out all the occupants of these bomb proof entrenchments." (p. 5)

about books which will or which will not "go." It does not follow that an English class in a vocational high school wants to read only about Thomas Edison; and lyric poems whose substance would seem too remote from urban experience to have meaning have been known to enchant "underprivileged" pupils in our megalopolitan schools.

### *Literature and Leisure*

The question of reading, especially in the setting of other "leisure-time activities" like the movies and the rest, has got itself involved with another perplexing problem. Much educational theorizing on the subject speaks of reading as a "worthy leisure-time activity." That in most cases reading is a harmless pleasure is a platitude the truth of which the committee has no wish to deny. In another sense, however, "mere" reading is scarcely to be distinguished from day dreaming; and the kind of pedagogy which would place a book — almost any book — in a pupil's hands merely because he "likes" it is tantamount to educational nihilism. There is no virtue in reading as such. The mere passive reception of vague imaginative perceptions, thrilling situations, or sentimental emotionalism is not merely without immediate educational value but may also result in positive harm. The pupil who is tacitly encouraged to believe that all print must give him immediate pleasurable emotions or suffer the penalty of being discarded is not being taught. The mind grows only as it is challenged; and reading, if it is to develop an intelligent citizenry, cannot safely remain forever a "worthy leisure-time activity." It is notable that neither music nor the visual arts are taught, where they are taught successfully, with any such flaccid end in view; and yet the success of both music and the visual arts in the secondary schools has been marked in many schools. The committee is interested to note the confused implications of the word "reading"; and must again declare that those in charge of the schools are under some obligation to determine what it is they want the English teacher to accomplish in this respect. An extreme statement has at least the advantage of

clarity; and the extreme statement can be made that if the English teacher is to be merely a giver out of books for "worthy leisure-time activities," the school librarian can do the job as well and perhaps do it better. But if "reading" connotes intellectual growth, if the presumed aim of "reading" is to bring young Americans into living contact with a vast cultural heritage, then the task of the English teacher is both unique and important: unique in that no other teacher on the staff can do his work; important in that the contribution of the English class to high school education is a major contribution to the continuing life-stream of a cultural tradition. The task is also one of supreme difficulty. Presumably the very difficulty of the job is the cause of the innumerable changes and reforms which are here being outlined.

### III

## EXISTING DILEMMAS IN THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS

ANOTHER crucial dilemma which confronts the inquirer into the education of the future teacher of English arises from the fact that teacher-training is the work of two educational agencies which are but imperfectly coordinated. These agencies are the school, college, or department of education (or normal school or state or private teachers college) and the department of English in the liberal college or the university (or the department of English in the college of education, normal school or teachers college, the members of which tend to share the professional attitude of their colleagues in the liberal college or the university). It is of course an open and notorious secret that professors of "subject-matter" courses have often looked with disfavor or contempt upon the work done in schools of education and that the educational faculty has often dismissed the professional aims of the subject-matter courses as merely "scholarly," "pedantic," or worse. The committee is not interested in this war of words except to deplore it; but it is interested to search out the fundamental causes for the disharmony which too often exists between these two educational agencies. This disharmony seems to arise from an imperfect reconciliation of two educational ideals, each admirable and necessary in its sphere.

### A. THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

What is the primary purpose or purposes of the department of English? The great bulk of its work concerns the undergraduate. In the usual curriculum all freshmen are expected to satisfy a requirement in elementary composition (almost

the sole universal requirement for a B.A. degree), and in many colleges a beginning course in literature is also required for such a degree, whether the undergraduate "majors" in English or not. The department may also be called upon to administer special courses in composition or public speech for other branches of the university (for example, the engineering school), to supervise an all-university check-up of English written in other courses, or otherwise to police the written or spoken language for the whole school. All these jobs taken together mean that a large part of the energy and time of the department is taken up with "service" work; and that, although other departments also do "service" work, the requirement of freshman composition implies that the burden laid upon the English department is always heavy and often larger than the burden laid upon other branches of the liberal college.

Other courses offered by the department below the graduate level may be elected by any undergraduate, but the "advanced" courses are usually of most interest to those who "major" or "concentrate" in the field. Undergraduates who concentrate in English do so from a variety of reasons, often vague. They may elect the subject because of its cultural values. They may choose English because they regard it as good preparation for careers as writers, journalists, actors, or what not. They may prefer it because it is "easier" than the stricter discipline of the sciences or mathematics. They may move into the English department because they cannot think of anything else they prefer to do. And they may propose to teach the subject in the secondary schools. As the charge is sometimes thoughtlessly made that the lack of sympathy on the part of the department towards teacher-training is due to a professional interest in turning out "scholars," it should be said that no English faculty worth its salt looks upon its undergraduate "majors" as miniature Ph.D.'s and that there is no evidence to show that the undergraduate program is anywhere arranged with this nefarious purpose in view. The Ph.D. will of course have been an undergraduate, but the undergraduate is nowhere regarded as a future Ph.D.

Although the English department customarily offers instruction in composition over and beyond the freshman course, and though it may concern itself with play production and speech, radio work and the movies, its main occupation is the teaching of English and American literature, and the bulk of its work is with English rather than with American books. The purposes of this instruction are, or ought to be, clear. The department hopes to acquaint as many students as possible with literary history, having in view the desirability of knowing the cultural traditions of the English-speaking peoples. It wants the students to read as many literary masterpieces as possible, having in view the beauty and wisdom of the works which form part of the education of a cultivated person. It also desires to examine the better literary work written in recent and contemporary times, having in view the truth that literary art is a potent force in contemporary culture. Its aims, briefly put, are the dissemination of knowledge about the past and present of literature in order to improve taste and increase insight into culture, human nature, and the world.\*

Another important task of the department is its graduate work, leading to the M.A. or the Ph.D. degree or to both. Some departments in the smaller colleges or universities offer excellent programs for the master's degree; in larger universities where the M.A. program has tended to become routinized and formal, the graduate interest of the faculty is concentrated on the doctoral candidate. In any event the number of courses explicitly devoted to graduate work is much smaller than the number devoted to undergraduate students or to that combination of graduate-undergraduate instruction known as the "middle bracket" or "upper group" course. Nevertheless, one of the proper professional aims of the department, and one to which the attention of the permanent staff is steadily directed,

\* For the sake of clarity this sketch omits courses in world literature, classical or foreign literature in translation and any other "non-English" course, although instruction in Old Norse, Celtic, the Bible, and similar subjects is sometimes offered in the department. The sketch also omits for the same reason any connections between the department of English and other departments, such as history, philosophy, or some of the foreign languages and literatures.

is graduate work. Graduate work is often ignorantly attacked, and doubtless it has its weaknesses. Scholarship is, however, a normal human interest, and the creation of professional literary scholars is as laudable an aim as the creation of professional chemists or professional librarians. The instruction of graduate students is therefore customarily regarded as the crown of departmental work, and teaching a "graduate course" is looked upon as the reward of a ripening experience and a maturing scholarship. The department jealously guards the time, the energy, the quality of instruction, and the range of subject matter germane to the continuation of literary scholarship through the creation of masters of arts and doctors of philosophy.

In a college operating on the semester basis 120 semester hours are necessary for a B.A. or B.S. degree. Of these not more than 60 are given over to freshman and sophomore work of the "general college" type, including of course the required courses in English. Of the remaining 60 hours 20 or 30 cannot be employed in the department of concentration because the student is under the necessity of meeting other degree requirements, including the wise provision which prevents the undergraduate from doing all, or most, of his advanced work in a single field. Consequently only 30 or 40 semester hours of advanced work are normally available for the undergraduate "major" in a given department. It is at this juncture that the difference of opinion between the professor of English and the professor of education begins. For in the case of an undergraduate who desires to teach English in the secondary schools an extra-college requirement appears for which the English professor has little sympathy. The state law demands of any college graduate desiring to enter high school work some 15 or 16 hours in the school of education. These 15 or 16 hours must come out of the 120 semester hours required for graduation, and they do not ordinarily come out of the hours necessary to work off the general requirements for the bachelor's degree. Consequently they tend to come out of the block of time which might otherwise be devoted to concentration in

English. The paradoxical result is that the future high school teacher who brings only a B.A. degree to the job is usually less well prepared in subject matter than he would have been if he had not elected to teach in the secondary schools. The department of education very properly defends the thesis that some preparation of the teacher *qua* teacher is necessary, and argues that much of the required work for concentration in English is irrelevant to the high school problem. The department of English retorts that the law in question is probably the result of lobbying by professional "educators," that the education courses are empty of content, and that the general distaste for these courses felt by bright students is one of the principal causes why only the mediocre go into high school teaching.

The situation thus far sketched concerns only the teacher who comes into the world of high school teaching with a B.A. degree. A second level of difficulty may, however, then develop. In the endeavor to improve the quality of its high school teachers the state law or a school board or some other agency may either require additional work in English of its high school teachers or refuse to promote teachers who do not have an M.A. degree or reward the attainment of an M.A. degree by a promise of a salary increase. Or the high school teacher may honorably desire to know more about his subject and seek an M.A. But high school salaries being low, the teacher being unable to secure a year's leave of absence, and the school board not grasping the nature of advanced literary study, the teacher in question may return to the university during the summer to do "advanced work" and eventually, through the cumulation of credits, thus secure an M.A. degree. Two corollaries immediately follow. Inasmuch as, during his undergraduate years, the student in question, because of the necessity of fulfilling requirements in "education," actually did less work in the English department than the student who did not plan to teach, the graduate work now being done is actually not so much advanced work built upon previous instruction as it is work being done to fill in "gaps"—i.e., is



really fulfilling an undergraduate purpose, though it is counted as graduate work, the result being that the M.A., when it is once acquired, really does not represent the same amount or quality of graduate work as that represented by a "straight" M.A. The second corollary is that, however excellent courses offered in the summer session may be, the whole nature and atmosphere of the summer session differ from that of the regular session. The faculty is differently composed, the course offerings are differently put together, the standards of visiting professors may differ markedly from those of regular members of the faculty, and the totality of an M.A. degree principally acquired during summer sessions may differ markedly from a degree regularly acquired during the long term. In consequence of these considerations the "regular" graduate faculty in English is not inclined to be enthusiastic over an M.A. acquired under these circumstances, and the fact that the education department, anxious to improve teaching and aware of the sound truth that summer session work is often the only work possible for ambitious high school teachers, is particularly active during the summer session does not make for the happiness of the department of English, which feels that standards of scholarship are being lowered. What is true of the M.A. is, or may be, true, *pari passu*, of those institutions which offer a Ph.D. in education and English.

There is, however, a deeper problem still. The primary purpose of the English department at either the undergraduate or the graduate level is the preservation and the spreading abroad through its students of a knowledge of past culture. Whatever its interest in contemporary literature, whatever ancillary tasks in the field of dramatic production or the writing of radio scripts or "engineering English" it may also assume, this preservation of an orderly knowledge of the past through literature is the reason why the department is maintained. It is, indeed, the only agency in our civilization charged with this important duty, to alter which would be to alter materially the whole concept of the relation of past to present upon which an evolving society depends in part for

its guidance. The demands laid upon the high school teacher of English, however, are not of this same character, and a painful antinomy is developing between the purposes of the college department of English and the purpose of high school English teaching. The colleges hold that the principal concern of the department is with literary classics and literary history. The secondary schools tend more and more to diminish the amount of time and interest given to these things. The college English department holds that the historical approach to literature, the understanding of phases of culture other than our own contemporary culture is central to its purpose. The secondary schools seem to be more and more engrossed by the contemporary. The colleges cling to the older and traditional concept of a humane education. The secondary schools do not cling to the same concept. The colleges, though they will not admit it, are educating an intellectual elite; the secondary schools are struggling with great average masses of American adolescent youth.

If the principal purpose of the college English department is the dissemination of knowledge about the past and present of literature and the inculcation of taste and insight into culture, human nature, and the world, it has a complex and delicate educational problem on its hands. One may debate endlessly the merits and faults of a particular course, a particular school of interpretation, or a particular department; nevertheless the aim is excellent, not only in itself, but also because the department of English is the only educational agency now fulfilling this particular purpose. The English department naturally believes that it could produce better teachers of English at any level if candidates studied more English rather than less. Precisely at this point, however, the secondary schools and the school of education enter a series of demands which the English department is unable to meet, and some of which it cannot approve. The department cannot undertake to supply instruction in international politics and radio work and a sympathetic attitude towards labor, except incidentally. It cannot by any conceivable change of its cur-

riculum, if its central purpose be sound, adduce that insight into sociology, economics, and current events which seems to bulk large in current programs of high school English.

Instruction of this sort, to be sure, is supplied by other departments of the liberal college. But if instruction in the social sciences, for example, is to be made part of the program of training teachers in English, the hours for that instruction are very likely to come out of the hours which otherwise would be given over to English, so that the English teacher will know less literature rather than more, even though it appears that he does not now know enough. Moreover, the economics department does not teach the economic interpretation of literature, the sociology department does not teach the social implications of the English novel, and the department of political science does not presume to inquire whether Shakespeare was or was not in favor of a limited monarchy. Possibly the departmentalization of knowledge is regrettable, but given the college world as it exists, given the admirable purpose of the English department to protect and preserve the history of literary culture, the English faculty cannot be asked materially to alter its curriculum in order that high school teaching of the contemporary and the sociological shall go forward increasingly. If educators agree that English teachers come from the mediocre group in college, the department is, one repeats, likely to take the stand that the proper way to make better English teachers is to see that candidates have a richer and wider acquaintance with English literature. The English department which is honorably true to its aims will continue to insist that a wide acquaintance with literary classics is essential to the preparation of teachers, while at the same time the school of education and the secondary school world seem to be less and less interested in such an acquaintance. In sum, the present demands in teacher-training seem to be at cross-purposes with the present aims of English departments, and it is this profound difference in educational philosophy which renders the task of the committee so difficult.

The committee does not wish to paint too dark a picture, nor

is the problem insoluble. Attempts at a working *liaison* between the English department and the school of education for the purposes of teacher-training have been made, and have occasionally been happy. At the same time candor compels us to state that in our observation the training of teachers has nowhere been a principal purpose of the department of English, even where a kind of harmony has been established between the department and the school of education. The practical shape of this *liaison* varies. In some universities there is a joint board composed of representatives of the school of education and representatives of the liberal college, including of course the English faculty. In some institutions the professor in charge of the courses in the teaching of English may be a member of the school of education faculty nominated by that faculty and approved by the department of English or *vice versa*. In others, courses in the teaching of English are offered by the department in conjunction with a program of teacher-training worked out primarily by the school of education. In certain more elaborate establishments the college of education has established its own faculty in English, and this faculty may work in harmony with their liberal arts colleagues, though it is clear that a college of education cannot hope to duplicate the work of the standard English faculty. In schools where there is no course in the teaching of English and no professor of English in the educational faculty, certain courses in English are noted as being especially appropriate to teacher-training, and one or more members of the English department may be especially assigned to advising candidates for degrees which will enable them to enter high school work. In no case, however, can it be said, even when there is a high degree of harmony between the two branches of teacher-training, that the English professor interested in that subject enjoys unusual distinction among his scholarly colleagues because of this interest, and there is a general feeling that men of lesser caliber may be safely assigned to this inferior task while their more distinguished colleagues pursue research work or prepare doctoral candidates.

The refusal of college English departments to concern themselves more seriously than they have hitherto done, with the high school problem has had disastrous results upon our whole educational system. For one thing, there is an appalling ignorance among professors of English regarding the high school of today. They tend to think of the contemporary school situation in terms of the preparatory schools from which they were graduated a quarter of a century ago, not realizing the profound changes which have occurred in twenty-five years. In many cases specialization in earlier fields of literary history has cut off excellent men from a sympathetic understanding of contemporary life and literature and therefore (in part, at least) from the high school world. Long immersed in a universe of literature, they do not comprehend the profound effect of new forms of entertainment, of new political interests, and of new social questions upon the high school generations; and, dissatisfied because entering freshmen are less well prepared than they ought to be in writing, speaking, and the knowledge of books, they tend to blame the school of education for debasing and watering literary culture. The regrettable fact follows that in too many cases there is a lurking (or even an open) hostility between the school of education and the department of English; and in certain institutions the gap is so wide that, although the department of English is expected to offer courses which will train the future teacher of that subject, the school of education is unable to cooperate with its liberal arts colleagues and is therefore compelled to operate almost blindly within its own sphere of influence.

#### B. THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Such is the situation analyzed from the point of view of the department of English. When one crosses to the other side of the educational boundary and looks at the picture from the point of view of the school of education, other weaknesses and difficulties appear. To an analysis of the American school of education the rest of this section will therefore devote itself.

The professional study of education is relatively young in

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this country. The first chairs of "education" or "pedagogy" were established at the end of the 19th century. Of course, the English departments are also, relatively speaking, "parvenus" in academic society. In almost all modern countries chairs for modern philology, including the native language and literature, were not founded before the beginning or the middle of the 19th century. Modern philology, however, could build up its proper methods of research and of teaching in close connection with an older tradition, represented particularly by classical philology, history, and certain fields of philosophy. That, however, was not the case with the American science of education.

In countries where "education" had been cultivated long before it started in the United States, it had been — and partly still is — connected with the philosophical faculty. Generally a professor of philosophy lectured on the philosophy and history of education; and when at the end of the 19th century psychology began to attract increasing interest, chairs were sometimes established for a combination of philosophy, psychology, and education. It depended on the particular inclination of the professor which of the three fields he favored and which he proposed necessarily in some degree to neglect.

This fact of course long prevented education from developing into an independent field of research. Yet, because it remained within the philosophical faculty, it preserved a certain unity of tradition and some contact with broader areas of thought and research. Characteristic of this development are the internationally outstanding works of such men as Gabriel Compayré in France, S. S. Laurie (who in 1876 was appointed the first Professor of the Theory, History, and Practice of Education at the University of Edinburgh), or Friedrich Paulsen in Germany.

But in the United States the study of education cannot look back upon such a relatively steady growth. The faculties of the liberal arts had not built up a science of education firm enough to serve as a basis for more extended educational studies when the need was suddenly felt. There were no

leading writers on education in the departments of philosophy whose names could be compared with those of the three men just mentioned. When, for example, Henry Barnard began to cultivate the history and theory of education in the United States he was (like Horace Mann not long before him) more or less an academic outsider. His first task was to translate an astounding amount of continental European literature on pedagogy in order to lay a foundation for his subject. In the wake of Mann's and Barnard's work some of the more important books by Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Herbart were published, but in spite of the considerable influence of this literature, it was by its very nature not American. One can say that not until the appearance of the first works of John Dewey did American educational theory come of age.

A second reason why the American science of education could not develop within the frame of an older tradition was the immense expansion of the American school system which took place partly as a result of the increase in the population and partly as a result of the change in the social character of the American high school. As a result of this development American professional educators were suddenly required to deal with social, psychological, and didactical problems and with issues in curriculum-making and administration, of unknown weight and extension. For the clarification of these problems mere historical and philosophical research in education was insufficient. There was, in addition, pressure from school authorities, who wanted practical answers to their immediate needs.

A third reason for the breaking away of the science of education from the older humanistic tradition lies in the fact that the development of the schools of education coincided with a deep and general despair about the possible help which theology, philosophy, and the other humanities could bring to our modern population in its attempt at readjustment to the necessities of our industrial era. Educators who felt this need naturally looked for help from others; and, understandably enough, many of them supposed that the need might be

met by resorting to the (supposedly) more reliable methods of the natural sciences, which at the end of the 19th century had reached the climax of methodological self-confidence. Many in the schools of education followed a kind of scientific positivism which contributed much to detailed research without regard to the older cultural and spiritual foundations of our civilization. These men likewise lacked the philosophical self-criticism necessary to judge the extent to which it is possible to apply methods of the natural sciences unrestrictedly to the problems of man as these appear in education.

The consequence of the three factors just described was that the science of education in America during the first decades of the 20th century adopted an eclectic and sometimes haphazard method of research. (This usually happens when an older tradition no longer suffices and when new principles of thought have not yet been established.) In considering social problems education could not avoid partaking of all the methodological difficulties which sociology, then just appearing in the scientific arena, had also to go through. In its interpretation of individual development and of the nature of man, education for a long time believed one-sidedly in a particular form of psychology. This psychology was only too confident it possessed scientific formulae for the interpretation of the mind; yet it was itself unaware of its own methodological presuppositions, its unproved positivist metaphysics. In the field of didactics and curriculum-making many new experiments were made, laudable to some degree; but the experimenters lacked self-criticism because they lacked insight into the complexity of the relationship between education and civilization. Finally, in administration, professional educators had their hands full, meeting the most immediate needs of the day. They had no time to think more deeply over the essentials of democratic life.

No doubt, in certain fields of research the science of education in the United States surpassed similar research done elsewhere, at least in quantity. Its originality and quality are another matter. Other countries had neither the staff nor the



means to carry on educational research to the extent it was carried on in the United States. Moreover, a fresh and energetic start in this country allowed the envisaging of new and promising aspects of educational investigation. But even so, one has the feeling that the enormous effort put forth would have been better rewarded if educators had been less isolated from research in other fields of thought.

During this phase of their development schools of education helped considerably to awaken interest in, and to accumulate knowledge about, the development of the child, the character of the learning process, the measurement of mental processes, and the social implications of the modern school in a democracy. They helped slowly to transform methods of education even in schools which clung to education as an art that magically arose from the contact of a teacher who knew his subject with his pupils whom he knew nothing about. On the other hand, American schools of education developed a sort of educational specialism, a utilitarianism without clearly conceived ideas of the tradition and complexity of human civilization, and without a primary philosophy competent to clarify the problems involved in harmonizing the ends of education and the means. Generally speaking, these defects prevented the science of education from rising toward standards adequate to its enormous complexity and responsibility.

In recent times much criticism has been levelled against "schools and colleges" which "have been sending out into the world men who no longer understand the creative principle of the society in which they must live," because they do not know enough about the seminal forces of the Graeco-Christian tradition (Walter Lippmann). This attack, however, has been directed against the entire American educational system, not merely against institutions for the training of teachers. As a matter of fact, one would have no difficulty in discovering a similar indifference to the broader problems of mankind in many other fields of thought. The natural sciences, for instance, which, even after the middle of the

19th century, had in general successfully combined minute methods of research with a deep interest in more universal problems of man and nature, had also developed a dangerous contempt for larger philosophical questions. Even in history, philology, and philosophy itself the accumulation of facts or the mere analysis of information was often mistaken for liberal studies. But the dangers of such a tendency were bound to show with particular clarity in the field of education. It is a pursuit which continually applies the results of theory and research to growing human beings and it is, therefore, not only particularly responsible for social results but also particularly exposed to a pragmatic test of its methods.

In consequence of their own growth and of the increase of people who, professionally or as laymen, became interested in the training of youth, schools of education produced an enormous and rather mediocre literature. If they formed parts of larger colleges or universities, they encroached upon the time of the students which had hitherto been reserved for the older faculties. Small wonder, then, that the older faculties looked with considerable suspicion at the invader. These faculties were apparently unaware that, given a little more vitality, a larger interest in the actual problems of society, they could themselves have controlled many tasks taken over by the schools of education, merged these with their own activities, and thus permitted a more organic development of the relationship between higher learning and education.

Our remarks certainly simplify the historical picture, and in addition, we note that important changes have taken place during the past few years. Nevertheless, we are justified in saying that the present situation is far from being satisfactory. Possibly this analysis of the defects of the situation may also yield clues for solving the problems which it reveals.

To make one general remark first: New tasks cannot be discharged, new burdens cannot be met, unless a few outstanding institutions of higher education support departments of education morally, financially, and intellectually. Only

through cooperation among all the arts and sciences (and education is both an art and a science) can new and necessary experiments be made. It is relatively easy for schools of education to attract attention through publicizing new and glamorous experimentation, but the experiment most necessary for the schools of education, namely the improvement of substantial and comprehensive scholarship within their ranks, needs time and patience before results can be shown.

Second: the science of education must develop a clear understanding of its own methodology. It must arrive at clarity about the problem when and where scientifically "exact," measurable and technical methods of research are suitable, and when and where the promotion of educational thought and research is dependent on methods derived, not from the natural sciences, but from the older humanities which, during many centuries, have built up a great tradition interested in the interpretation of man, his work, and his civilization.

These remarks are not intended to disparage scientific, statistical, or mathematical methods of research when these are in their proper place and aware of their own logical premisses. Education will always need testing of some kind or another, it will need technical insight into administrative and didactical problems, and much good statistical work. But because this is the case, because education needs a fine sense for even the irrational in problems of man and society, the educator dealing with technical problems in his field must be broadly trained in order to avoid the danger of becoming a mere technician.

Third: in order to achieve this reincorporation of the field of education into the *universitas litterarum*, it is necessary to relate the training of prospective instructors in schools of education or educational departments more closely to the liberal arts. Modern books on education too often imply that their authors know little outside education proper, and move on a thin level of consciousness concerning the main components of our modern civilization. Similar specialization is

found elsewhere. But education is that activity of man through which he wants to transmit the best of his heritage to the next generation. Narrow specialization is therefore a more dangerous quality in an educator than in other professions which can live out of their own substance and are less related to the actual totality of man's civilization.

It is historically understandable that the last two or three generations of educators should be disappointed in their philosophical and historical training. Even the courses given within educational departments on the history of education and similar fields are often unattractive to students. But we must not close our eyes to the catastrophic consequences which must occur if the field of education becomes a mere technical affair, in place of being a liberal and comprehensive concern for the growth of man and of the nation within the frame of humanity.

Because of the lack of social prestige, poor pay, uncertain hours and restrictions on individual freedom, it is difficult to attract promising young people to a teaching career. The situation grows worse if they feel that in schools of education they are taught by instructors who give out long explanations of technical details which any intelligent person understands when he faces them in practical life. Equally distasteful are "specialists" who devote most of their time to writing profitable popular works instead of refreshing themselves and their courses through research and through continual contact with deeper sources of knowledge. We question the wisdom of appointing instructors for subjects in which they have not done, and do not intend to do, any substantial research. Such appointments inevitably lead to overestimating the merely didactical aspect of education. We also doubt the wisdom of permitting instructors to teach summer school year after year, a practice too common in educational faculties. Vacation is almost the only time when instructors can quietly concentrate on new work and new ideas. If members of the faculty of education cannot live without the income from summer courses, then it is better,

and in the long run less expensive, to raise salaries instead of wasting scholars.

Fourth: in order to achieve a broader understanding of American education, closer cooperation on the part of the liberal arts faculties is necessary. If promising young students are disappointed by over-emphasis on the technical side of education, they are also disappointed by the Alexandrian kind of scholarship they meet in some courses offered by the liberal arts faculties, where an accumulation of facts and merely verbal knowledge are confused with understanding a problem. We do not advocate setting up "survey courses," or a certain modern neglect of factual knowledge. A thorough observer knows that youth is not afraid of facts or of a thoroughly humanistic approach. The interest manifested in such experiments as the curriculum of St. John's College sufficiently proves this statement. On the other hand, in almost all modern countries, responsible educators complain that students are turning away from the traditional humanities towards more modern fields of study. This cannot be due solely to youthful desire for easy shortcuts — modern students are not less diligent and serious than their elders. On the contrary, many of them read and work so much that they have no time to think and to digest. But they want to use their learning and knowledge for something worth while, a tendency which is not identical with superficial utilitarianism, but is, on the contrary, characteristic of a sound mind. In an excellent article on "College Students and Philosophy" \* M. C. Otto, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Wisconsin, has dealt wisely with this issue, pointing out the failure of the older humanities to help modern youth in finding constructive ways of thought about their own (and society's) essential problems. Any improvement in the training of teachers depends not only on an overhauling of the educational faculties but also on a re-examination of teaching in the liberal arts.

If American colleges and universities were to re-examine

\* *Journal of Higher Education*, Volume X, Number 8, November 1939.

their studies, if, in the problem particularly before the committee, departments of English and schools of education were to investigate their own professional assumptions, they would find that, instead of encroaching upon each other's territory, they complement each other. The teacher in the school of education should be able to draw upon the student's capability to understand human problems, a capability trained through contact with great literary, philosophical, and historical documents, with studies of nature, with history and sociology. The teacher in the department of English ought to consider a student's interest in education, not as a loss but as an opportunity to come in contact with human problems, a contact which must lead the student to approach great works of art with a more experienced mind.

There are, it seems to us, two fundamental problems behind all the questions just discussed. The first is in the incapacity of the modern university to combine the advantages of modern specialization with the preservation of cultural unity. The second lies in the relationship between theoretical and applied knowledge, particularly in the relationship between scholarship and preparation for teaching.

So much has been said in recent years about the first of these problems that it is here sufficient to mention its significance. The second requires longer consideration from us. So long as the tendency exists among certain scholars in the liberal arts to consider everybody as a banausic creature whose interest is in the application of knowledge, no reform in the relation between the educational faculty and the English department will be possible. On the contrary, this tendency will increase as each of the two follows narrowly and exclusively its immediate interest and indulges in depreciation of the other. Both the school of education and the liberal arts must lose in the long run. Educational faculties will not have men able to defend the deeper cultural responsibilities behind the process of democratic education. The liberal departments will lose in creativeness and influence on youth, for both these qualities depend on contact with actual life. It may sound

paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true, that productive historical interpretation, like the preservation of the best of civilization, can be carried through only by men who are at the same time deeply concerned with the present and its problems.

Of course in all studies there will always be an element not attractive to the student. Nobody can achieve high standing in the humanities who does not willingly give a considerable part of his time to studies which appear at the beginning as abstract, remote from life, and unyielding to the desire for quick satisfactions. On the other hand, those who deal with education professionally will have to devote much of their time to the understanding of facts and techniques which, in comparison with the lofty fields of the *belles lettres*, are disillusioning. He who does not courageously face the disturbing reality within, and behind, individual and social problems of education ought not to become an educator. But in dealing even with these problems the academic teacher has this choice: he can develop a searching mind which reaches into their depths and shows their general human significance, or he can remain on the surface and present his material in a dry and technical way. Essentially it is not the subject but the mind dealing with a subject which creates a source of intellectual stimulation or of dreariness.

Therefore every discussion of our problem must eventuate in demanding a type of academic teacher who not only knows his subject, but who also possesses sufficient perspective and wisdom to combine the liberal and the technical responsibilities of education into a culturally productive unit. What we require from the individual teacher, we must also require from the academic body as a whole. There are no mechanical recipes for fusing English and education; the solution depends upon more living issues. How is each field being taught? under what circumstances? in what institution? to whom? for what specific purpose? Here, as elsewhere, confronting any complex problem, one comes back to Aristotle's statement about the character of moral virtue, a statement applicable

not only to ethics in the stricter sense of the word but also to all wise action amid difficult conditions:

Enough has now been said to show that moral virtue is a mean, and in what sense this is so, namely that it is a mean between two vices, one of excess and the other of defect; and that it is such a mean because it aims at hitting the middle point in feelings and in actions. This is why it is a hard task to be good, for it is hard to find the middle point in anything: for instance not everybody can find the centre of a circle, but only someone who knows geometry.\*

The problem of training teachers in our institutions of higher learning will not be solved unless more and more people know the difficult kind of geometry which is necessary for understanding the relationship between the liberal and the applied arts. Only then will each benefit the other.

\* Quoted from *Loeb Classical Library*, Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Translated by H. Rackham, III, iii, 17.



#### IV

### POSSIBLE AIMS OF TEACHING ENGLISH IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

THE logic of this report has carried us over a wide field. Beginning with an examination of the social setting of the American high school which revealed the perplexities of its pupils, the confusion in its curriculum, and the intricate and changing relations between the school and the community which supports it, we were carried next to some consideration of the capacities and weaknesses of those who teach in the secondary schools. In so confused a situation it is not surprising that the intent of the high school curriculum should be vague and wavering, and when the focus is narrowed to the particular problem of the reason for teaching English at this level, the committee finds an almost unintelligible confusion of tongues. The report therefore turned to an examination of the place of the college English department and of the school of education in the preparation of teachers of English, surveyed the defects and virtues of each of these, and, implicitly or explicitly, offered suggestions for improving these parts of the university world and for uniting their efforts towards a common aim. But this common aim cannot be basically understood unless the "ending end" is understood; unless, that is, the principal goals of English teaching at the secondary school level can be set forth so simply and directly as to command the adherence of all parties to the controversy — the collegiate department of English, the school of education, the secondary schools, and the public at large. This is a Herculean — it may be an impossible — task; and yet without some clarification of aims it seems to the com-

mittee hopeless to make any concrete recommendations. For unless we know what we are training teachers of English to do, we cannot train them effectively; and the best way to find out what teachers of English are to do is to inquire whether, amidst the confusions of educational theory and practice, it is possible to discover essential aims of permanent value. The committee hazards the guess that some of the existing controversy will be reduced if agreement can be reached about such purposes in teaching English as the following. If, in discussing them, the report retraverses ground already touched upon in earlier sections, the reader is asked to be patient. It is only by the continual return to fundamental elements that progress can be made.

#### A. ORAL ENGLISH

One of the chief purposes of teaching English should be the improvement of speech. By this is meant that pupils should at all convenient opportunities be encouraged to seek clearness of enunciation, correctness of pronunciation, and as much fluency and grace of expression as they can attain.

In so vast and complex a country as the United States there is perhaps no common standard of "correctness" in spoken English except in the pragmatic sense that words must be so pronounced as to convey meaning. Speech rhythms, enunciation, and even pronunciation vary from one part of the country to another. This situation is rather to be welcomed than deplored. In setting up clearness of enunciation and correctness of pronunciation as desirable aims, the committee does not have in mind an attempt to "school-marm" the language after a pattern of artificial propriety essentially unreal. Doubtless the influence of the talking picture, the radio, public speaking, ordinary social intercourses and the "practice of the best speakers" does much to establish a general standard of "correctness," and this standard can be used as a norm within obvious limits. But the attempt to school pupils in clearness of enunciation and correctness of pronunciation cannot suc-

ceed if it flies in the face of usages standard in a given community or region. Each of the several speech patterns which enrich and diversify American English — that of the Yankee, the Southerner, the Middle Westerner, the Westerner, and even that of more local “dialects” — has characteristic virtues and defects. The virtues should be encouraged; the defects modified or eradicated. Slovenliness, to be sure, remains slovenliness whether an indistinct enunciation comes from the mouth of a resident of Beacon Hill or that of a New Mexican cow puncher. Equally, however, raciness lends a desirable tang to conversation whether the speaker be a York state farmer or a Creole fisherman. To steer a practical course between what is acceptable in current speech and what is undesirable requires of the teacher a better knowledge of how spoken English “works” than is the possession of many teachers; it is, however, in this middle ground that the teaching of oral English can be most effective.

To be sure, other difficulties also appear. Except for particular purposes, such as vocational training for the stage, the radio, or the like occupation, improvement of American speech has not on the whole caught the sympathy and interest of the general public. Beyond a modicum of “correctness” in pronunciation, interest does not go; and almost any American community is content with indistinctness of utterance, failure to pitch the voice correctly, failure to enunciate all the syllables of a word and all the words in a sentence, and indifference to an agreeable and pleasant tone of voice. Under particular circumstances, indeed, the possession of certain traits of voice and manner associated with cultivated people may even be regarded as evidence of snobbish pretentiousness. Nevertheless, the ability to speak clearly and agreeably in ordinary conversation is generally held to be a virtue, even by those who would resent intonations and mannerisms which they associate with social pretentiousness; and once it is made clear that the purpose of the teacher is not to introduce an artificial dialect, but to lead pupils to make such improvements in current spoken English as they can, it seems sure that at-

tempt will receive sympathy from school authorities and the public.

A second difficulty lies in the artificiality of much present-day high school debating, oratory, and elocution. To be sure, there has been a healthy discarding of some of the artificial mannerisms which used to characterize activities of this sort, but enough probably remain to confuse the issue. The training of a few pupils in "elocution" is, needless to say, not what the committee has in mind. Neither does it desire only the selection and training of a few gifted souls for high school dramatics and debate. Pupils with a flair for this sort of thing should be encouraged, as time and opportunity offer; but the principal endeavor of the teacher should be to raise the general average of speech. A wider insistence upon the ability to speak well and informally is what is needed.

If this purpose is to be attained it is quite possible that new techniques must be worked out. The old-fashioned habit of reading aloud has certainly dwindled in the nation, and has probably dwindled in the schools; its revival, with the aid of such pedagogical insight as psychologists can give, is probably desirable. The old-fashioned habit of recitations of memorized prose and poetry is also obsolescent; possibly something could be accomplished in this direction. Certain it is that when the pupil is called upon to recite in class, the teacher should insist that he speak clearly and with reasonable correctness; not only should the instructor refuse to accept slovenly enunciation and slovenly posture, but he should also inquire into the psychological difficulties which prevent some pupils from overcoming shyness in the classroom. In this connection it is at least possible that English teachers may learn more from expert teachers of oral English in the college world than they have hitherto done; but for this training to be effective, some change of interest may be necessary among college and university departments of speech. Whether it is possible to "teach conversation" directly may reasonably be doubted; and the whole question of proper training in speech habits needs greater investigation.

It should not be necessary to argue the point that the English teacher himself should possess an agreeable, clear, and accurate manner in speaking, but the failure of many teacher-training programs to insist upon this essential quality in the English instructor has undoubtedly admitted into the profession teachers who exemplify the very faults which the committee is eager to see corrected. Certainly no school board should employ any teacher who cannot speak clearly, agreeably, and fluently, but because the English language is itself the substance of English teaching, maltreatment of the mother tongue by English teachers is especially to be deplored. Here again, it must be emphasized that the committee does not desire to insist upon a single artificial standard of correctness and elegance for the whole country; it merely points to the obvious truth that if the English teacher does not exhibit the right qualities of speech, he cannot well hope to improve the speech of his pupils.

It may be argued that the secondary school teacher should also "do something" in the case of pupils exhibiting such speech defects as stammering. The cure of most speech defects of this order is, however, an intricate problem in psychological therapy; and it cannot be too strongly urged that well-meant tinkering with such cases by teachers not professionally trained may do almost irreparable damage to the pupil. In very large or very wealthy school systems it may be possible to attach to the staff clinicians capable of administering the right sort of therapy; for the most part, however, this is probably impossible, and what is practically desirable is not that the English teacher shall be trained to remedy pathological speech defects, but that he shall be trained to recognize them when he meets them and to advise recourse to competent physicians and psychologists.

## B. WRITTEN ENGLISH

A second fundamental purpose of English teaching is the improvement of the language *written* by pupils. No indictment of the schools is more common than the resentful and

bewildered complaint that they do not teach students to write correct and intelligible English. There is no need to insist upon the importance of English composition in the schools; everyone agrees on its importance. But for what fundamental purposes and by what methods should composition be taught? Controversy on these points is active and intense, and symptomatic of the confusions in current educational philosophy.

### *Has Student English Deteriorated?*

Whether the English written by students of today is on the whole less correct and less intellectually competent than in preceding decades is uncertain. The impression that a serious deterioration has occurred prevails fairly widely; but to some extent at least it is just as reasonable to suppose that educators have become more sharply aware of errors and language difficulties which have always been widespread. Diagnosis is catching up with cancer, and recognizing it in many cases that formerly went unnoticed. But whether the use of English by students has, on the average, deteriorated or not, it is clear that the schools are not to be held responsible, certain that they are not solely responsible. The increase of the school population, the inclusiveness of the present secondary school system, and the apathy of parents have enormously complicated the entire educational situation. The conditions faced by the schools make it easy to draw a number of false conclusions, against which it will be well to guard. The fact that a student writes badly by academic standards does not necessarily mean that he is unintelligent, or even that he is without linguistic proficiency in his own sphere. He may be an expert in the language of baseball or of automobile-repairing; such expertness is beyond the range of the English teacher, and is not brought to light by educational "tests." The student who writes badly in his English class may not lack a lively tradition of culture; he may possess knowledge and expressive power of great shrewdness and flexibility, but of a sort that does him no good in school. The point is not that the school should cease trying to train him

in culture and linguistic accomplishment of a more academic kind; the point is to avoid passing a premature or unfair judgment on the student as a human being and as an intelligence both lively and able in his own sphere. In metropolitan areas, notably in the East, the students are often rich in linguistic tradition, but the tradition is bilingual, and the English teacher is often unable to tap it. The student may be in contact with a rich heritage of culture, but his heritage may have little to do with the standard authors or ideas of the Anglo-American genteel tradition. The cultural tradition of a Jewish or Irish family may be rich to the point of abundance; it appears thin in the schools because the schools are geared to a different tradition. The purpose of these remarks is, again, not to recommend any diminution of the training attempted by the schools in the English language and literatures. The point is to recognize the conditions within which the schools operate, and to recognize also that failure to write good school English does not have any simple universal significance. Such a failure must be interpreted in the light of the influences that have played upon a given student. The transformation of the school population reflects great changes in American society, over which the teacher has no more control than has any other citizen. In this situation, the teacher must begin by recognizing the *importance* of composition in the work of the English teacher, and by trying to arrive at a clear and sensible conception of the purpose of school training in written English.

### *The Fallacy of "Creative Writing"*

This purpose may seem obvious, but a glance at some prevailing views on the subject will remove the comfort of certainty even on this fundamental point. To begin with, a widespread theory holds that writing, at every level, is essentially a creative act, involving the expression of the self, with its deep-seated emotional needs and impulses. The implications of this view, as applied to education, seem clear. Writing, to the student, is essentially of psychological value. It

provides an emotional outlet, and promotes the development of the personality. Writing should therefore be surrounded with the utmost possible freedom. It should be as little as possible inhibited by formal drill, by the demand for externally imposed correctness, or obedience to conventional rhetoric or traditional forms. Every student possesses within himself creative faculties, powers of imagination which will flower and unfold under the proper incentives. To make them flower, to elicit active and vivid responses, not to train the student in the artificial conventions of correctness, is the chief purpose of written composition.

Without the slightest hostility to what is salutary in this view, the committee wishes to insist on its dangers and limitations. This conception, the committee feels, runs a number of serious risks. It is in danger of trying to satisfy the supposed needs of the pupil at the expense of the need of society for trained minds. Whatever a trained mind may be, it is certainly not a mind that demands of the world a constant opportunity for emotional outlets, or that asks of life at every turn a chance to develop the personality by spontaneous imagination or free expression. It is not a mind that resists every demand for formal discipline, or finds such demands hostile to personal development. The view under discussion seems to the committee to conceive of education wholly in emotional terms, and to make altogether insufficient allowance for intellectual training. Here, as at every point, education gains not by stubborn allegiance to a single set of demands, but by the balancing, in a clear perspective, of a number of different and equally necessary purposes. "This ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone."

The notion that all writing is fundamentally creative, and that all students are potential creators, runs also the risk of misconstruing the real needs and nature of the pupils. Whatever may be said about children in the elementary grades, it is a question whether all secondary school pupils will find their own best development through relatively free and spontaneous composition. A girl in high school once wearily pro-



tested to her mother, who, as it happened, was herself a teacher, "I don't see how I can be imaginative again today." The imagination of many pupils probably thrives better at times on more or less literal materials, on matters of fact, on problems of reasoning and understanding, than on constant demands for vivid responses and emotional creativity. It is the very nature of freedom not to be compelled; a spontaneous response should never be crushed, but there is other work to do in the world as well.

If every secondary school pupil were a potential imaginative writer, the conception of writing in the schools as fundamentally creative would be better founded. But such a notion needs only to be stated to become absurd. All secondary school pupils are not in any sense prospective professional writers; they are not all potential journalists, let alone dramatists or poets. If they were, society would not know what to do with them, and they would be destined to miserable lives. The creative conception of writing may well contain disguised vocational assumptions of the most dangerous kind, which can only arouse cruel disappointment in the later lives of pupils who take them seriously.

But it also contains, if it is not carefully thought through, a misconception of the very nature of the creative. This word has done much damage in educational discussion. It is used in a riddling sense to beg, not to solve, important questions. The notion that all imaginative creation is free and spontaneous, that it is not amenable to formal discipline and does not require trained intellectual faculties of analysis and reason, fundamentally distorts the truth. The notion that a well-presented and thoroughly thought out exposition is not creative and does not call upon the power of imagination is equally false. Exposition without insight and imagination is as defective as spontaneous expression without form or coherence. The wise teacher will conclude that the needs of emotional and personal development can be recognized to the full without giving them the sole or even the central place in education. Pupils should have every opportunity to express their

emotions and vivid responses when these really press for utterance; but we need not conclude that they have fulfilled their whole educational duty when they have produced poems, essays, or stories that serve fundamentally as outlets of personal expression.

### *Semantics*

By contrast with the ambitious notion of creativeness, the textbooks commonly say that the aim of composition is to produce a clear, correct, and agreeable style. This dictum is unexceptionable, but does not advance discussion. The words "clear, correct, and agreeable," or any similar epithets, are so vague as to be applicable to a dozen different styles. And if, within general limits, we can recognize these qualities in writing, how are students to be trained to master them?

At this point it will be convenient to consider another set of views on composition teaching. The words "clear, correct, and agreeable" imply standards to be met, and suggest training of a distinctly formal kind. If the partisans of creation object to formal training for one set of reasons, a different group of critics objects to it for another. This group would radically modify both the study of the printed word and the pupil's training in composition by introducing a system of verbal analysis associated with the popular topic of semantics. The disciples of semantics advance the view that a great deal of grammatical teaching, as it has traditionally been carried on in many schools, has defeated its own avowed purpose. Formal analytical grammar, they maintain, together with old-fashioned drill in punctuation and spelling, has failed to produce correct writing, and for very significant reasons. Grammar as a purely formal study neglects the all-important fact that the *meaning* both of what the student reads and of what he writes constitutes the groundwork for any successful use of language which he may attain. Old-fashioned parsing of sentences and old-fashioned drill in the parts of speech misrepresent many important facts of language, and become divorced in the student's mind from the fundamental notion

that his purpose in studying language is to discover the meaning of what he reads and to express meaning himself when he writes. Such drill, therefore, does not produce correctness, or clearness, or agreeableness in writing. Grammar must be taught so that its *function* is evident to the student. Profitable writing does not originate in grammar or in formal rhetorical training; it originates in the purpose to express meaning, and grammar should therefore be taught as an auxiliary to this purpose.

What is meaning? Those interested in semantics divide language broadly into two categories: the emotive and the referential. Some language, they find, evokes emotional responses in the reader and seeks to direct these responses toward particular ends. Other language conveys more or less verifiable information or empirical knowledge. For the terms in such language the reader can find "referents"; the correspondence of the words, not with emotions, but with determinable entities in the world of tangible experience, is more or less evident and subject to practical tests. The semanticist devotes much time and energy to interpreting metaphors, reducing pretentious abstractions or generalities to their tangible points of reference, if any, and detecting emotive language posing as information or truth. For the semanticist, the meaning of a word is determined not by its definition in the dictionary, but by the context in which it is used; and this context includes the particular intention, tone, and attitude of the writer.

This committee believes that the views of the semanticists contain much that is salutary and useful for education. To set the understanding and expression of meaning at the heart of the task in both reading and writing is entirely to the good. To recognize the difference between language that serves for emotional evocation and language that conveys empirical knowledge is altogether salutary. To emphasize the importance of context as a guide to meaning is simply to recognize an ancient truth. In all these ways, the interest in semantics acts as a valuable corrective to much bad and un-

productive teaching of the recent past; and whatever may be said of some of the methods and material used by teachers in the first bloom of conversion, the main propositions of the semanticists accurately define the nature of the English teacher's job in reading and composition. The committee desires only to point out some excesses to which the contemporary interest in semantics is likely to run.

First of all, if this lively interest does not take itself cautiously, it is apt to give off the suggestion that all formal knowledge is idle. Some formal knowledge, on the contrary, is useful and necessary; it is, to borrow the movement's own word, functional. The semantic attitude toward grammar can be enlightening and enriching to the student, can intensify and enlarge his grasp of the principles of language. It can also be pressed to the point of useless and confusing sophistication. In the sentence, "The man ran bravely," a teacher recently pointed out, "bravely" is formally an adverb, but derives its meaning as a modifier quite as much from the substantive in the sentence as from the verb. If this kind of analysis is used to sharpen the student's perception of the limits and real nature of formal classifications of language, it should serve an admirable purpose. If it is used to obscure the fact that formal differences exist, or to suggest that they are unimportant or without function, it can work only harm. The formal difference between adjective and adverb is a fact of usage, not of theory, and it is not a fact which has sprung up for the delight of grammarians, but for the use of those who wish to communicate with each other. The committee believes it indispensable for pupils to know the parts of speech, the relations of subject, predicate, and modifiers, the distinction between independent and subordinate clauses, and similar common facts of rhetoric, syntax, and grammar. Such knowledge constitutes a more general and immediate need for the majority of students than do semantic refinements, however illuminating these refinements may be to pupils who can take them in. But if there is an indispensable quantum of grammar that every student needs, there is also the problem of how it should

be taught. The committee agrees that grammar should be taught in such a way as to awaken the student's mind to its *raison d'être*, which is to enable a writer or speaker to convey meaning, and not in such a way as to leave it an inert matter of drill, unrelated to the significance of the pages that the student reads and writes. But some part of grammatical knowledge will remain formal, none the less, and the committee sees nothing to be gained by obscuring this fact. All classifications are no doubt to some extent arbitrary; but they are not therefore unrelated to fact or without usefulness. The ordinary classification of the parts of speech certainly does not completely describe all the functions and psychological relations that may obtain among words in a sentence. It does provide the student with the means of making some primary distinctions, which although formal in a sense are also practical and useful. The technical terminology of grammar, syntax, and rhetoric is as legitimate as the technical terminology of a gasoline engine. No one would recommend that an informal epithet describing the function of the carburetor should be substituted for the word "carburetor"; yet there are those who would recommend that an auxiliary verb be called a "helping word." The function of the carburetor and the function of the auxiliary verb must be described and illustrated while the student is learning them; but while functions no doubt often suggest names in the first instance (as in "auxiliary verb"), the purpose of a name is not necessarily to describe a function but to make rapid identification possible. And this does not mean that names are useless or merely formal. Names indicate things recognized and understood; they sum up preceding processes of analysis and experience. Grammatical terminology may need reform, but that is only to say that we need a new terminology, not a periphrastic or speciously simple substitute. In the meanwhile, grammar, syntax, and rhetoric must be taught, and the prevailing terms ought to form part of the student's linguistic equipment.

The committee sees another danger in the uncritical application of semantic predilections. This is the danger that the

teacher may substitute special interests or personal hobbies for educational tasks of larger and more general concern. To apply the last refinement of analysis to a metaphor, to disentangle all the effects of a surrounding context on a word, to clarify an ambitious sentence or expose its emptiness by a paraphrase in simpler terms, give both teacher and pupil a sense of intellectual triumph which may be very valuable. But metaphors do not exist to provide occasions for analysis; the dictionary is still relevant to the understanding of words; and paraphrase is a means, not an end. The intoxication of zeal can magnify all three of these valuable interests until, starting as means for the advancement of understanding, they become feats repeated and practiced for their own sake. So also, an advertisement, a news story colored by editorial attitude, a piece of propaganda may make an admirable example of "emotive" language posing as information. In so far as exhibits of this kind advance the student's power to understand the significance of what he reads and writes, and hence advance his general command of language, they are educationally useful, and have a valuable place in the classroom. But the English teacher who leads his pupils to analyze the devious ways of propaganda or the blandishments of advertising stands on delicate ground. He may be regarded by interested groups outside the school as a subversive agent, and so may be subjected to particularly unwholesome forms of pressure. No such pressure should stop the teacher, if he likes, from exposing emotional evocation representing itself as knowledge or science. If the motive of the teacher in dealing with examples of propaganda were simply the social motive of forearming the students against its effects, there might be debate on the validity of propaganda as material for the English class. But the teacher has in fact a direct professional motive in the use of such material wherever it can further an understanding of the uses and power of language. Yet here again the teacher faces a danger. He must not allow his students to wind up with an impression there is ground for believing that overzealous semanticism too often leaves with

them — the impression that all language is hypocrisy, that every man's expression of his belief is "propaganda," that all thinking is rationalization and disguised axe-grinding. Particularly where literature is concerned, the student must not be allowed to feel that the purpose of studying language is to see through it so that one can discount its art and disbelieve its record of experience and aspiration. The high school debating forum should provide a convenient laboratory where legitimate uses of persuasion could be discussed, and the distinction between responsible and irresponsible statements cultivated. Needless to say, the high school debate is a valuable educational resource on many grounds. It offers an opportunity to combine the student's knowledge, his power and willingness to prepare a topic, his command of the essentials of composition; and, not the least valuable point, it requires him to give final expression of all these powers through his voice and presence.

To mention advertising and propaganda is again to be brought up against the troublesome question of what constitutes the natural content of English as a subject at the present time. Certainly the English teacher should not be forbidden to use such materials, and may even be encouraged to do so within the limits of discretion; but neither is the English teacher under special injunction to deal with them. They can be treated at least as naturally in the social studies classroom. English teaching is under pressure from so many directions to adopt all sorts of materials, to become a grab-bag for all manner of interests and problems from radio to table manners, that special care should be taken to protect its integrity. Dilution, loss of coherence, loss of a clear and recognized content, can only weaken and confuse any branch of educational training. English as a subject has already, in many schools, suffered such dilution and loss of coherence. The committee, in these remarks, is only insisting on the need for balance and perspective, the need for relating all the activities pursued in the name of English to some fairly coherent central purpose.

*General Purpose of Training in Composition*

The conception of secondary school training in composition must begin with the largest common denominator of students. What the great majority of students need, and what society needs of them, is the ability to express consistent thinking in clear and consistent writing. It is important to notice that this conception of the needs of the case is not framed in terms of college preparatory students, or of any other single group of students in the schools, but in terms of all groups. The education of all students is expected to be relevant to their needs as prospective citizens, and society needs of every group of citizens the best intellectual training which is possible within the limits of their capacities and aptitudes. No doubt there will be and should be some differentiation of topics for English composition among various programs in the schools adapted to the needs and aims of different groups of students. But to imagine that the educational needs of the college preparatory student are satisfied by attempting aesthetic verdicts on works of literature, while the student in the commercial course is reaching his peak of advancement by composing a letter asking for a government bulletin, is to take a crude and injurious view of secondary school composition. The commercial student should have his opportunity to write on books, and the college preparatory student should undergo a stringent expository training not merely on literary subject matter; neither should be limited to vaguely conceived ritual performances originating in an indefinite aura of superficial appropriateness to the kind of school program he is enrolled in. The primary need of students in every program is to be able to think and reach reasonable conclusions, and to put these conclusions in orderly written English. The student in any school group should be writing on a topic not beyond his grasp or irrelevant to his total educational aim, but sufficiently stringent to advance his powers of thinking and to call for the primary virtues of order and clearness in expression. The general purpose of



composition can be put in the same general terms for all groups.

Pupils, of course, also need such experiences in "creation" as they can profit by, and society needs their optimum personal development, emotional as well as intellectual. None the less, composition cannot take as its central uniform purpose the production of imaginative writing by all or most students. *Some* writing of primarily imaginative or expressive kind should ideally help to contribute to the development of every student; it will advance the student's total understanding and command of language as an instrument, even if his main purpose is to use language for more utilitarian ends. But the secondary school student of really distinct creative promise should be regarded as exceptional, just as mature people of creative ability are exceptional. The student's imaginative powers, once recognized, should be given every possible opportunity to advance. This does not mean that he should necessarily be placed in a college preparatory course; a different school program may well be better suited to his total needs. In whatever course he may be enrolled, the teacher should be free to allow him exceptional opportunities, to relieve him of some routine assignments if it seems wise, and to allow him to substitute other projects, either original plans of his own or plans which the teacher works out in consultation with him. The student, if he is allowed departures from the standard course, should be required to work seriously, and not to float on the prestige of the original gifts which the teacher has recognized in him.

*"Clear, Correct, and Agreeable" English*

The mastery of a "clear, correct, and agreeable style," if these words are broken down into more intelligible components, may well serve as the best general conception of an attainable level of composition in the average high school. This conception subordinates the notion of self-expression to which the more extreme partisans of the creative are addicted. It will be aided and promoted by any real and practicable

effort to put the pursuit of *meaning* at the center of the task, while treating the current predilection for semantics with suitable caution. But none of the three terms "clear, correct, and agreeable" is absolute or unequivocal; each is, on the contrary, a relative term, to be judged by a number of principles operating together in any attempt at composition. "Clear," for example, raises the question "clear to whom?" The test of clarity is often the extent to which the student has made himself intelligible to his classmates. This test is relevant to many attempts at expression, and has real value; but simply making himself clear to his classmates will not advance the student's mind unless the topic on which he writes furnishes some difficulties for both. Mere intelligibility to his equals will not stretch the student's powers or get him into adult life. Sometimes the teacher constitutes himself the test of clearness. But the teacher is a single highly specialized audience, and may demand explanations of terms — for example, terms in sports — that are commonplaces of understanding to the student. Writing for the teacher as sole audience strengthens in the pupil's mind the damaging sense of artificiality in composition, the sense that expression in the classroom is divorced from any natural concern of life. Sometimes the test of clarity is thought of in terms of an average educated audience. But this audience remains imaginary to the pupil, or is simply felt for practical purposes to be the teacher, disguised and attenuated to airy thinness. The pupil reads a play of Shakespeare or a novel of Dickens, decides that it is over the heads of the people he knows, and concludes that clarity is one thing in ordinary intercourse and another in literature or educated discussion. The student's conviction that composition is artificial is fortified again.

Obviously a number of considerations enter into a judgment of the clearness of a piece of composition. First of all must come the demands of the topic. If the student is trying to explain the function of a carburetor, or the reasons why some offices are elective and others appointive, or the motives of Sidney Carton, the first requisites of clearness are intellec-

tual. He must understand what he is talking about, and must put the results of his understanding in coherent order — first things first, second things second; cause in the proper relation to effect, and so on. These first principles of clearness are more or less independent of his intended audience; they apply to his thinking rather than to his language. But his mode of expression must obviously be judged partly, at least, in relation to some natural audience. His classmates form one natural and proper audience — the most immediate and tangible group of listeners available to him. The school paper, the debating club, the teacher, or even an imagined audience of more literary readers, form other groups to whom he may appropriately think of himself as speaking or writing as he deals with one or another kind of topic and purpose. He might naturally explain a carburetor to his classmates; the difference between elective and appointive offices might figure in a debate, with adult listeners present; a literary subject would naturally find expression in the best literary language he could command (not in the most florid!). Clearness in diction, style, and tone shades off into appropriateness, and merges with the ideas suggested by correctness and agreeableness. A certain level of literary diction would not help the total effect of clearness in an explanation of the carburetor; the language natural to an explanation of the gasoline engine would not aid the total clearness of a paper on a literary subject. But more than language enters into clearness. An inappropriate tone, for example the facetious tone, may impair the clearness of a straightforward exposition; a flat and unimaginative tone will not promote the clearness of an impression of a place or a character.

Correctness is also a relative concept. Here it is again the nature of the topic and the purpose of the writer that together determine the standards of judgment. The danger for the teacher is to be narrowly exclusive in his idea of correctness, to hold fanatically by a single bookish conception of good usage and to enforce this conception by external and mechanical methods, leaving out of account differences of in-

tention, topic, and audience. A debate should not be presented in the lingo of the streets, nor a literary essay in the telegraphic spurts of the comic strip. On the other hand, the language of the movies, of swing music, of drugstore fiction has reality and immediacy for the student. To build on its capacities, to refine and enlarge its resources of expression, will prove a more rewarding approach to composition than to hold the student to a frigidly remote literary ideal. Students can be brought to see that there are different levels of expression, and that the choice of a level depends upon the total occasion on which expression occurs. Mr. H. L. Mencken, in the earlier editions of his work, *The American Language*, included versions of the Declaration of Independence and of Lincoln's Gettysburg speech in slang. Students can enjoy the slang and recognize in it the image of their own voices; they can also see its gross inappropriateness to the occasions which Jefferson and Lincoln actually faced. To lead them to this perception is to invite them to add to their natural level of language another level of greater dignity, responsible to more serious demands, without stigmatizing forever as "incorrect," by a standard remote from life and depressing in its artificiality, every use of the familiar colloquial language in which they converse with each other. No doubt students, in written composition, should strive constantly to advance in serious educated expression; but something depends on the particular composition the student is writing at the moment. If the student is trying to set down an impression of a character he knows, the language of that character is an appropriate instrument for the impression. "Correctness" then becomes a function of his total skill in using the range of language appropriate for his purpose. Students should be led to see that colloquial American speech has its place in literature, that it serves as a medium in which eminent writers can report seriously on human experience. With the example of *Huckleberry Finn* before them, or such later examples as the stories of Sherwood Anderson and Ring Lardner, they should be left in no doubt about the place of

the colloquial idiom in the total range of expression. The pupil can quickly enough perceive the main natural uses and limits of this idiom. He can see that its virtue is for characterization, for presenting people and their experiences in their own time and place, and by the idiom that most intimately reveals them — their own natural speech. He can also learn, by a little helpful experimentation, that colloquial speech is an exceedingly difficult and exacting medium for the careful writer; it demands an acute ear, a highly skilled and trained power of selection, and a control of style, if anything, even more thoroughgoing than literary diction demands.

Agreeableness is to be judged by similar considerations. To say that only one range of diction, only one standard of usage, can under any circumstances be agreeable, is to fly in the face of literature and the facts. Agreeableness is also a function of the total situation, in which the topic, the writer's purpose, the intended audience, and the tone and diction appropriate to the whole enterprise, are important ingredients. Agreeableness should exclude any element of the stilted, the self-conscious, the pretentious, or the florid; yet stiltedness is one of the commonest vices of student expression, and must result in part from tacit encouragement by teachers. Parents admire the sentimentally genteel, and the student, instinctively aware of the artificiality of the standards to which he is held, regards an agreeable written style as something like the manners expected of him in dancing school. Truly agreeable writing avoids verbiage, avoids false embellishment and affectation, does not repeat or reiterate by accident or helplessness, does not avoid repetition where repetition is natural or helpful. A list of common elements of agreeable expression could easily be drawn up. But beyond these common and general elements agreeableness merges into the appropriateness of diction, tone, and cadence to the time, place, purpose, and audience. The student might well be asked what radio announcers seem to him to have the most agreeable voices and to use the most agreeable manner for various purposes. What sports announcer or what musical commentator presents his

case most agreeably over the air? Is excitement the main desideratum in a sports announcer's voice and diction? Is it agreeable to hear the words "The my-estro is on the podium," in a tone of syrupy adulation? The pupil will be told that natural rhythm and cadence are important elements in the agreeableness of a written sentence. But what is the source of verbal rhythm? Does it lie in adherence to external rules of usage or style, or does it come from the voice and the daily cadences of speech? If the pupil is led to see that verbal rhythm comes ultimately from the voice and the spoken sentence, he may come to respect it more and to regard it as natural and real. He can also be led to see that the rhythm of expression, like its tone, its level of diction, and all its other properties, is a function of the writer's total purpose in relation to his topic and his audience. The teacher, for his part, must learn to make judgments involving the words "clear, correct, and agreeable" not in terms of formal textbook criteria merely, but in terms of the student's purpose, the nature of the problem set or attempted, and all other relevant circumstances.

### *Style and Content*

"Style" is a particularly equivocal word. In one sense, style is the expression of individuality. Few secondary school students are mature enough to be expected to possess a distinct, individual literary style, nor would training devoted to this end as a general or universal purpose of composition teaching be sensible. In another sense, a general style exists which is the common idiomatic way, in any given language, of forming phrases and sentences, placing modifiers, and relating thoughts. Style in this sense is concerned with intellectual order and with the normal linguistic usages which have become habitual in a given language as methods of expressing intellectual order. It begins in reading and thinking, and proceeds, at the point of composition, to the intelligent planning of a whole piece, the proper structure of paragraphs, the mastery of the common forms of the sentence, the right

use of words for precise meaning, the logical and natural use of connectives, and the proper relation of thoughts by clear transitions. It is to this general conception of style that secondary school pupils should serve their apprenticeship.

But if this apprenticeship is to be fruitful, the teacher must constantly bear in mind certain general principles. The student is not likely to carry into practice rules of style learned abstractly, as textbook precepts. Here the objections of both the semanticists and the believers in the creative have full force. The student may learn to say with exemplary faithfulness that paragraphs must be unified, yet never be able to write a unified paragraph of his own. Writing does not originate in external precepts; it originates in the pupil's mind, and that mind must be activated by a not merely rhetorical stimulus before it can produce any writing to which the principles of rhetoric will usefully apply. The student must begin, not with a rule instructing him how things are to be said, but with *something to say*. An important task of the composition teacher is to teach the students how to have something to say. Not all of them by any means can be relied on to furnish content spontaneously. They must be taught how to explore their own minds, to reflect on their experiences in relation to their families, their communities, their education, their adventures with books. They must be led to find material for expression in the content of studies other than English, or in hobbies or interests about which they can acquire information through libraries or through personal inquiry. When the student has possessed himself of some usable content and has turned it into writing, the principles of rhetoric and the categories of intellectual order can be discussed in relation to what he has produced. Only so can stylistic training be expected to make headway.

For imaginative students, at ease with books and themselves endowed with the beginnings of literary sensibility, the study of writing as an art will form the natural and sufficient stimulus to expression. Gifted individual teachers with a genius for awakening the minds of students to aesthetic perception

can successfully approach the problems of writing by way of the artistic sense rather than by way of the intellect. But for the mass of students taught by the mass of teachers it seems clear that the normal stimulus to writing should come from the attempt to master a certain body of information, or to reach consistent conclusions about some problem; writing should be primarily an intellectual training. Every student, of course, should ideally be brought to his farthest possible point of aesthetic development, but where one necessity must be given primacy over another, the general need for clear thinking and clear expression must be taken as the largest general aim of composition teaching.

### *Correlation*

By insisting that the student shall have something to say when he writes, and by leading him to understand where he may profitably look for content, the teacher may hope to build up in the student's mind a conception of writing as a natural activity, related to intelligible human purposes, and not as a special activity carried on only in English classes, a mysterious game of conformity to certain artificially imposed rules. At this point the English teacher will do well to exploit to the full all the possibilities of "correlation" between English and other studies that the school may afford. That the student should write essays on biology or social studies for his English teacher should be a normal procedure — normal to the point of banality — and not an educational innovation. But the word "correlation" has become a talisman, a word to conjure with; it is attended at the present time by certain dangers and injustices. Any subject can be talked about or written about in English; and this possibility has been seized on, under the protection of the word "correlation," to dump in the lap of the English teacher many responsibilities which he can accept only by sacrificing traditional and valuable parts of the English curriculum. A treaty of correlation should not be unilateral; if English is to give students an opportunity to speak and write on the content of other studies, then other



departments should aid the work of the English teacher by insisting that the student remember his responsibilities to the language, whether he is in the science laboratory or the history class, and by respecting the integrity of English as a subject in its own right. The English teacher should never forget, for his part, his primary responsibility for acquainting young people with as much of the literary tradition of their language and their country as they can absorb. This responsibility is gravely endangered at the present time. "Correlation" should not be allowed to make further inroads on it.

### *Literary Criticism*

Literature brings up the thorny question of the value of literary criticism as a basis for composition in the secondary schools. This question is full of injurious confusions. The primary point is that students should by no means be deprived of the privilege of reading great books and of expressing their responses to them. But there is a sense in which literary criticism, as usually understood or misunderstood, is not helpful as a basis of school composition, and may be definitely injurious. Literary criticism is commonly construed to mean *judgments* pronounced on the aesthetic skill of a writer or on the aesthetic value of his work. For such judgments students in secondary school are not mature enough. Their teachers are often little better prepared. Criticism as practiced by professionals in the current reviews, at a presumably mature level, often presents only a confusing mass of contradictory assertions. The student, invited to participate in this unfathomable contest, is justifiably bewildered, and saves himself by parroting the teacher's language or the cant of reviewers and blurb-writers. No educational end is served by this subterfuge. The high school girl who solemnly wrote that the style of Agnes Repplier is "refreshing" was perhaps honestly making her first and necessarily somewhat naive exploration of the realm of aesthetic perception; but it is at least as likely that she was serving up an epithet that she thought her teacher would approve of. It does not seem to the committee that

general statements of aesthetic praise or blame promote the intellectual growth of the student. If the girl who thought Agnes Repplier's style refreshing had made some actual detailed observations on the language of Miss Repplier's essays, comparing the diction with the language of some other writer, she would have been moving away from the loose and obscure realm of summary judgment and toward the more useful realm of fact and observation. Much of the prejudice of other academic departments against English as a "literary" subject may well arise from the improper use of literary criticism as a staple of English composition. Students should write about literary works, and should never be prevented from expressing their judgments. The teacher should encourage absolute honesty in the expression of opinions, however ingenuous or deplorable he may think the result to be. The point is that in the specific demands the teacher makes on the students, in the problems the teacher sets for his class, he should aim at advancing their minds by encouraging them to reach reasoned conclusions. On the whole, this aim is not promoted by asking the students to deliver aesthetic verdicts. The teacher should guide his pupils carefully toward a perception of the writer's skill in the literary works they read; this important source of pleasure and imaginative cultivation should never be omitted. But in asking the students for written compositions on literary reading, the teacher should put the weight of his demand on understanding, on the grasp of the author's plan and meaning, on the comprehension of characters and motives, on the features of the work that lend themselves most readily to coherent and fairly tangible discussion.

### *Writing and Speech*

When the student, after possessing himself of some suitable content, has produced a written composition to which rhetorical principles can be applied, the teacher should take care that his own conception of a "clear, correct, and agreeable style" is not too bookish. The school-marm's love is school-marm's English. Whatever this abusive phrase may mean, it

certainly implies timidity toward the colloquial. It implies a conception of style that puts the emphasis on outward correctness, on conformity to grammatical and rhetorical rule, and tends, if not guarded, insensibly to divorce writing from speech. But the voice, the natural breathing periods of the human organism in speech, the natural play of tone, constantly underlie all skilful writing that is not limited to some purely technical purpose or to the barest and bleakest and narrowest expository intention. A rule may be stated in language without any vocal tone, perhaps most usefully so; but any attempt to defend a position, to express feeling, to distinguish between ideas when ideas arouse human interest and have human importance, needs to be animated by a sense of the voice behind the written word. The semanticists tell us that the writer's attitude is an important ingredient of the total meaning of almost every human utterance, and they are prophets of an old gospel on this point. But much of the writer's attitude, his tone, his way of taking his subject, make themselves felt by the play of voice in the written language, which may be regarded as a device for communicating speech without the presence of the speaker. In literature, dramatic tension, whether in the stage play, the novel, or the lyric poem, is largely a tension transmitted by voice — the personal tone of the writer felt in the style, which is an extension of his voice to the page; the contest of emotions in the dialogue, which follows the patterns established by the play of human feelings back and forth in conversation; the inner monodies of the characters in soliloquy or in "stream of consciousness," which must approximate to their natural speech; the breaks and deviations of rhythm in verse, which bend to the natural intonations of the spoken phrase. The style of our own day in literature is much more colloquial than the style, let us say, of the Victorian period; literature, in both prose and verse, struggles to break up the more formal, the more purely *written* conventions of recent tradition, and to compose itself out of the living American speech. In this total social context, the student is unsafely guided who is, whether by intention

or not, allowed to think that the only correct style is an extremely bookish and formal style. Such a conception, however arrived at, must either puzzle him sorely or lead him to a well-justified revolt when he reads the novels or the plays of his contemporaries, or the poems and plays of the sixteenth or seventeenth century. Every human being undergoes his first experiences with language through speech. Both the comprehension and the use of language begin with speech. Written language is a later development, and depends on the word heard and the word spoken for full understanding and full control of expression. Education may well have lost irreparably by abandoning the old habit of reading aloud, and of memorizing; for what was memorized was spoken. It brought into play the entire vocal mechanism, to which both comprehension and expression through written symbols may well be more closely related than educators have lately perceived.

The teacher, it is true, is faced with peculiar difficulties when advised not to cultivate a too bookish conception of style in his students, and to treat written language as an extension of spoken. The speech of the students will not form an exhilarating basis for any kind of expression. But it is gratifying to think that in many schools, vocal and written composition are both receiving generous attention, and are being advanced harmoniously together. The teacher here, as in every part of English studies, confronts the incessant dilemma: this ought ye to have done, and not to have left the other undone. Both the speech and the writing of students must be brought to a higher level of correctness; but correctness is not to be conceived of as merely formal, as a bookish, impersonal conformity to rule. It is rather to be thought of as precision, as complete articulation whether of idea or feeling, in a medium suited to the purpose of the particular utterance, and promoting the student's intellectual advancement. The terms of the discussion are necessarily loose and vague; the spirit should be clear.

The art of theme reading does not consist in placing formal

correction marks in the margins, or in numbering specific errors of rhetoric according to a check-list in a textbook. The art of theme reading consists in a psychological diagnosis of the pupil's language problems; to arrive at such a diagnosis the teacher must know the pupil, must know his interests, his difficulties in thinking and reading, his characteristics of mind and temperament. It is notorious that under the common present conditions of secondary school teaching individual conferences are impossible. But let us not deceive ourselves: where conferences with separate pupils or small groups of pupils, with sufficient time for thorough and detailed discussion of what the student has written, are forbidden by the teacher's excessive load, we simply cannot expect much real progress in the use of written language. The point is not still further to overload already overloaded teachers, but simply to recognize the fact that six classes a day of thirty to fifty pupils each goes far to make education in any real sense impossible. If this is to be the terminus of the teacher-training program, if this is to be the field in which educational philosophy is put to work, then the best imaginable training and the wisest of all philosophies can only end in defeat.

The principal points recommended in this discussion are not new doctrine; they are an attempt to state sound and ancient tradition in a form applicable to the present and hospitable to the most hopeful tendencies of the present. But, properly understood, the view of composition urged by the committee should lead to far-reaching, even radical modification of many school programs and of the spirit in which composition is taught. We conceive of written composition as primarily a mode of intellectual advancement through progress in logical thinking and in control of expression. We believe that training in composition should provide rich opportunities for imagination and the creative instinct, while maintaining constantly its general purpose of promoting intellectual order and understanding. We believe that everything possible should be done to help the student feel that writing is a natural act related to real concerns in his life, and involving always a topic,

a purpose, an audience, and the selection of a tone and a level of diction appropriate to the total occasion. The student is serving an apprenticeship to the long and infinitely various tradition of style in English; this tradition is neither single and uniform, nor is to be profitably served by mere external fidelity to inert forms and rules. It needs the animation of a purpose and the freedom to adapt means to ends. The teacher must allow the requisite freedom without ceasing to hold the student to his intellectual responsibilities, and without ceasing to be the guardian of a reasonable stability in educated English usage.

### C. LITERATURE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL \*

Those who are to teach literature in high schools should ask themselves *for whom* literature is important and *for what*. Is it important only for the limited group of pupils who mean to go on to college? Is it important for the light it may throw on civics or history by means of "correlation"? Is it important for the cultivation of superior taste or refinement? The committee believes that obvious and definite preliminary answers to these questions can be given. The preliminary answers will not suffice, but will pave the way for answers that may prove more circumspect and more satisfactory.

First of all, literature — as much of it and at as high a level of excellence as their capacities can be stretched to — is important for *all* pupils, not for any select caste or any limited group anticipating special educational hurdles. The importance of literature in American education is not limited to the usefulness it may have in getting pupils into college or preparing them for further literary studies when they get there. Of course literary texts suitable for the most gifted students in *any* group cannot be taught with equal success to all the scholars in private or public secondary schools. But if the social background or mental capacity of any pupil or group

\* This section owes much to a preliminary draft of the Report of the Literature Committee of the School and College Conference on English, 1942.

of pupils creates a problem in the choice of texts, this problem does not invalidate the position that literature is for all pupils in proportion to their power of grasping it.

It is plain enough also that while literature offers many tempting and valuable opportunities for throwing light on other studies and enriching them, it cannot exist for the English teacher exclusively or mainly for this purpose. The teacher who sees literature, for example, only as an illustration of a social thesis or a source of social data obviously does not grant literature an autonomy, a standing and a value of its own as an art, and such a teacher may justly be suspected of blindness to what it is that he is trying to interpret to his pupils.

Again, while no one will object to the improvement and refinement of taste, even among a limited group, any definition of the importance of literature which stopped with these words would not be treated seriously. More than aesthetic taste and refinement of perception are involved in any belief in the importance of literature in education which could survive the pressure of the times; more has always been involved, as any acquaintance with the humanistic tradition will show.

"Humanism" is a formidable word to invoke in a discussion of the teaching of literature in high school. But one way, at least, of getting at a leading philosophy for the teaching of literature is to try to define the end that teachers might pursue if conditions were universally favorable, and then to consider what modifications or sacrifices or preliminary practical steps and problems teachers must face in meeting conditions as they are. The writer or the private reader as an individual may treat literature as his personal tastes incline him to do. He may write or read as a means of making a flight from reality; he may find in literature a weapon for scandalizing the bourgeois or promoting social revolution or furnishing an ivory tower. But the teacher dealing with literature as a part of formal education has responsibilities of a more comprehensive sort. He must be aware that literature can serve all of the interests

mentioned above, and more besides; and if he teaches in a humanistic spirit, he will be anxious to make his pupils aware of this fact, and to make literature contribute as far as possible to their comprehensive development as human individuals and citizens, not merely to a single taste or predilection.

*Implications of the Term "Humanities"*

Whatever we may mean by the "humanities," it seems clear that the term suggests three ranges of implication, which for the sake of discussion and analysis must be distinguished and labelled individually, although the separation is unfortunate and artificial. These ranges of implication are the intellectual, the aesthetic, and the ethical. The first two may be taken for granted. When a pupil becomes acquainted with some of Shakespeare's plays, learns a little about Shakespeare's times, his theatre and his life, studies his texts and tries to understand his language, it is clear that the pupil is doing intellectual work. When he reads a novel and learns to see into the methods by which the characters are presented, or by which suspense and climax are contrived, he is learning to understand and enjoy artistic skill, and this is at least a great part of what we mean by aesthetic responsiveness. But what about the pupil's ethical sense?

It seems plain that all studies are intended in some way or other to be good for those who undertake them. Education for citizenship and education for personal development alike have this end in view. The "good" that will satisfy some educators is conceived of as vocational, practical, utilitarian; it is enough if education gives the pupil a sense of civic responsibility and enables him to adjust himself to society in economic and psychological terms. The "good" that will satisfy others, while not deemed useless, is felt to transcend the directly utilitarian. It is not enough for those who conceive of education humanistically that the pupil should be trained to keep his economic and psychological footing in modern society and to behave responsibly as a citizen. The pupil should also have a glimpse, at least, through literature and the other arts, through



the history of nations and ideas, of the primary questions of value which have perplexed the human race and in terms of which civilization has reached its peaks of expression, of attempted order, of moral struggle.

But just how does the study of literature affect the developing ethical sense of young students? The obvious answer is that literature provides a set of noble and heroic examples. But literature is a record of the bad as well as the good, of man's dishonor and cowardice as well as his honor and courage. Thersites, Justice Shallow, and the Duke of Bilgewater are as good characters as the best, but they are not patterns of virtue to be emulated. Neither, for that matter, is Sir Galahad. The noble example is a noble example, and has its full virtue as such; but the ethical value of literature is not found by sorting the characters in epic, drama, and story into sheep and goats, with an exhortation to emulate one set and eschew the other. Nor is it found by attempting to apply literature directly to the practical situations of life. The retribution that overtakes Macbeth is a solemn and impressive spectacle, but it is not a retribution likely to terrify or deter the adolescent tempted to steal the price of admission to a movie. The spectacle of Macbeth belongs on the plane of imagination and has its value there. It mixes imperfectly, if at all, with the practical and the immediate. The teacher who uses literature principally as a text for moral preaching will have little success in leading his students to enjoy it as an art, and is likely to defeat the very end he has in view.

Where, then, is the ethical influence of the study of literature to be sought? First of all, the ethical complexity of literature, corresponding as it does to the ethical complexity of experience, should enlarge the student's understanding. Literature as a whole does not indoctrinate its readers in any one set of values; but if its report on experience is diverse, there is some degree of unity in its implied aim. The greatest writers have sought some kind of order in experience. They have pursued different values, perhaps have given their allegiance to what many readers would consider perverse values or vices;

but they have seen and felt experience as a field in which values are in contest with each other.

Two loves I have of comfort and despair. . . .

Even if the attitude of a writer is amoral, he cannot neglect the spectacle of moral experience as it exists in the world before him and in himself. Neither comedy nor tragedy could exist apart from moral experience, apart from desires crossed by circumstances or by the inner flaw, or apart from the traits of human nature incongruously mixed and at war with each other, and entangling their victims in cross purposes and absurdities. Whether or not literature is labelled in moral terms by the teacher — and probably on the whole it should not be so labelled beyond a discreet minimum — its picture of contending values is a great part of the stuff it is made of. To the extent that a student's mind is awakened to the vivid imaginative experiences that literature can give him, he will be awakened, directly or by suggestion, to the primary fact that the problem of values exists. Both comedy and tragedy will be sharpened for him as this awakening occurs.

As a further step it should be remembered that literature does not consist only of the stories told, the characters who people them, or the aesthetic arts of narrative or verse. There is in it something more. Literature means not only Odysseus and Falstaff and Huck Finn, but also Homer and Shakespeare and Mark Twain, who imagined and brought these characters to life. The author is present in his work, and the quality of the author's presence is felt in many ways. To mention one, it is felt in his power of sustained vision, which is both the vision of an artist shaping and contriving a connected work and the vision of a man with a certain way of taking the world and a certain way of taking himself, a kind of moral tone to which the attention of a pupil should be drawn as he becomes capable of looking beyond the simple elements of the story and the more obvious traits of the characters. The pupil who reads literature thinks the thoughts of great authors after them, and participates, incipiently at least, in their judgments

and feelings about men and the world. Thus in a real sense he is admitted to the minds of great writers, and to be admitted to the mind of Dickens or Mark Twain or Shakespeare, while it may teach no single clear lesson nor make the reader a better neighbor, is certainly an ethical experience. It advances ethical understanding and sympathy, surely one end of humanistic education. Such ethical education does not depend upon propositions about virtue, upon exhortation or moralizing; it depends on the understanding and enjoyment of the problems and the traits of imagined characters in situations and stories that give a representative view of human experience. Whatever literature may contribute to the developing ethical sense it contributes by being an art, not by delivering harangues or holding up examples.

Finally, a nation that trains its students in their literary heritage is providing them with a common tradition, with a body of imaginative materials which they share and in reference to which they can entertain different sympathies and allegiances while preserving a common basis of appeal and comparison. Uniformity of ethical judgment is impossible even if it were desirable; but a common tradition of culture keeps the lines of communication open, and enables men to argue their differences significantly and intelligently, in relation to a conscious tradition which all have received. To the extent that a nation is ignorant of its literary heritage, it is ethically ignorant. It may solve its problems practically, its citizens may be responsible and shrewd; but it has no conscious apparatus for considering the large questions of value, public or private, in relation to what human beings have known, suffered, and achieved in ages before. The literary heritage of a nation, especially of America, is more than national and more than literary. Literature shades into philosophy on one side, into political and social theory on another; the thinkers and writers of one land do not work in isolation, but build on the work of their peers in other lands and cultures. British literature has necessarily predominated in American education, perhaps to excess; but American culture has drawn from

Hebrew and Celtic, from Asiatic and German and Central European sources also. Hebrew and classical learning have been able to enter into education through traditions deeply established in the English language. Other cultures present more difficult problems, to which American education has perhaps given too little thought. But the primary fact is that literary tradition is essential to a fully educated society, and the fact holds for ethical education as fully and certainly as for intellectual or aesthetic education.

### *The Humanities in the High School*

The humanistic teacher of literature, then, works in a fairly definable spirit. He wants to make his pupils intellectually acquainted with the interpretation of texts, with the facts and interconnections of the historical record; he wants to help them enjoy an art and to understand aesthetic skill; he wants also to enlarge their ethical understanding and sympathy and to perpetuate the literary tradition by which a body of citizens can conceive its own past and its purposes for the future in the light of a common heritage. But how much of this general aim is applicable to the high school?

Obviously literature cannot be taught in a humanistic or any other spirit where literature cannot be read. The term "literature" implies documents of a certain degree of complexity, difficulty, and excellence. When the teacher is confronted with students of such background or mental capacity that they cannot read texts of any degree of complexity or literary excellence, he will be at a loss to teach literature; he will only be able to teach reading. To bring his pupils to the point where they can read any printed words connectedly — the newspaper, the simplest of stories, vocational books that have only informative value — will be his first task. We face the fact that many secondary school teachers are confronted with this task, which clearly must be undertaken. But while recognizing this fact, the committee deplores the confusion of thought which sometimes follows from it. This confusion may be defined as the view that any book which a student

can read is literature, or that any book he can read satisfies the needs of education. The teacher and the school administrator can at least keep the distinction clear in their own minds. If literary tradition must be sacrificed to the needs and capacities of a given group of students, at least the teacher should know that it is being sacrificed, and should not regard the necessary substitute as equivalent to what has been lost.

Moreover, the decision that a group of students is incapable of profitably reading great works should not be hastily arrived at. Education is a matter of progress from the less to the more difficult, and a good teacher may push back the apparent limits of progress to a surprising distance. Some members of this committee heard a skilful teacher describe how she administered remedial reading to a class of delinquent girls in a large city high school. These pupils, racially diverse and intellectually backward by accepted measurements, must have appeared to be unpromising educational material for any exalted conception of literary teaching. Moreover, it was *remedial* reading that they were to be taught. The teacher began with the simplest possible story material, which at the start occasioned difficulty enough for the class. At the end of the year, she had them reading Shakespeare and Dickens and voting that these were their favorite authors. The year's progress was a feat of adroit pedagogy and an exciting work of human reclamation; it stands in the minds of those who heard the account as an impressive caution against believing too easily that any group of high school students is ultimately unable to read the great authors.

Many high school students, especially in polyglot city areas, come from a background meagre and deficient enough in the elements of English-speaking culture; but some at least of these students are by no means of meagre background in other cultures — Hebrew, let us say, or German or Polish or Irish. Such students present another difficulty to the English teacher, who must necessarily work in an Anglo-American tradition and must thus miss many opportunities of exploiting a cultural heritage that may be beyond his range. It is still English that

must be taught in English classes, and the teaching of literature in English must continue to be founded on the great works of British and American writers who have used some variety of the English tongue, from *The Canterbury Tales* to *Huckleberry Finn*. But the teacher can at least do his best to learn what he can of the local background and inherited traditions of his students, to give them opportunities for using these traditions in written composition or class discussion, and to prevent their feeling or appearing inferior because the cultural tradition from which they spring is not readily available for use in American education.

### *Choice of Texts*

When the teacher has taken stock of his philosophy and measured the gap between ideal aim and actual condition, he will encounter certain practical teaching problems about which thinking will be profitable. One of the most important of these is the wise choice of texts. Here again fixed conditions may limit what he would like to do on principle. In an economically poor school system, the teacher may have to use the books that the school happens to own — dog-eared editions of *Julius Caesar*, or works acquired by historical accident and totally out of relation to the lives and needs of students in a given locality in the twentieth century. The teacher may be restricted by a prescribed syllabus to which the local administrator has an unlucky attachment. But at least certain sound principles can be kept in mind and applied as opportunity offers.

If literary tradition is to be sustained, then certain works primary to that tradition must continue to be studied by American students — the stories of the Old Testament, some of the plays of Shakespeare, some of the novels of Dickens, some of the writings of Hawthorne and Mark Twain, to mention a few obvious examples. The place of contemporary literature deserves thoughtful consideration. It is important that contemporary writers should be represented in the school curriculum. The student would form a meagre and academic notion of the literary tradition if he were not led to see it as

extending in a living continuity into his own times, and on into the future without interruption. He should be led to see the roots of the present in the past and to feel the richness of the present as partly due to its awareness of the past, whether by revolt or development or delighted emulation. The day should be well buried when the mention of a contemporary writer was a breach of academic dignity, when the literature worth serious attention stopped with Matthew Arnold or Longfellow.

Contemporary literature, moreover, has certain advantages in special situations and for particular groups of students. Pupils who have little facility in reading, whose command of language and ideas is not advanced, may well make more rapid progress if they begin with simple contemporary texts rather than with works remote from their experience and from the language which they know and can use. It is often useful to begin with books not too remote from the lives of the pupils and lead them gradually to works that lie at a distance from them in time and from the world they have some chance of observing for themselves.

But if the contemporary has its advantages, it has also its dangers. There is reason for believing that a vogue of the contemporary threatens to do away with traditional works altogether in some schools, reducing the whole perspective of the students to the shallow and immediate foreground. The contemporary can never be fully understood merely in terms of the contemporary; past and present need each other to become intelligible. An unrestricted vogue of the contemporary, moreover, is likely to blur the distinction between merely reading and reading literature, between simply learning to take in the sense of a printed passage and learning to discriminate and judge questions of value and degrees of excellence. Moreover, it is not always the contemporary that makes the most vivid and lasting impressions on the imagination of the young students. The unfamiliar and the remote often have a charm and a power for the young which the more immediate and recognizable do not exert. This important fact should not be

forgotten by those who deal with students at the age when literature can best be made exciting and wonderful to their minds. The difficult task of understanding and appraising contemporary literature requires, indeed, exceptional maturity. The modern realistic novel may well be a harder, and not an easier, trial of understanding for a high school student than *Twelfth Night* or *The Vicar of Wakefield*. Some training in the literature of the past is actually a prerequisite for understanding the literature of the present.

As contemporary literature should have its place together with traditional works, so American literature should have its place together with British. But if American students are to enjoy their literary heritage, then more than British and American literature is needed. Students must be given at least some glimpse of the classical and European sources of thought and expression in English, and the Hebrew and Oriental as well. A crying need exists for more solid and comprehensive knowledge by Americans of American institutions, history, and literature. But these have all taken form under the influence and with the aid of many strains of culture. An exclusive diet of American literature would be as bad in its way as the exclusive diet of British literature which many students of a generation past acquired from their college teachers. This is not a time either for chauvinism or isolationism in education.

Modern pedagogy delights in making the pupil's own volition, real or apparent, a shaping force on the curriculum. Within limits the pupils themselves should of course share in the choice of texts for reading. But it is clear that the teacher is responsible for their training and must see to it that the purposes for which the curriculum exists are suitably encouraged by its materials. Probably the place for the pupil's choice is largely in free or independent reading, although even here the teacher must be the responsible guide. Works read and discussed in common by the class during school hours must be chosen carefully by the teacher, although class preferences among equally suitable texts may be consulted, and some liberty of choice will be advantageous. The teacher's problem is



to find books that are in reasonable accord with the lives and capacities of the students and at the same time meet the purposes for which they are being taught. The teacher who knows his pupils individually, who knows something of their family life and background, their ambitions and problems, their capacities in thinking and in language, can best match the book to the pupil or the class when the school conditions permit flexibility. To enlist the student's interest in reading is a great part of the task, and for this purpose the book suggested or required should not be too remote from the student's life or too difficult for him at the start. But the teacher should not leave the student's interests where he finds them; the teacher is responsible for advancing his pupils as far as possible toward the larger goals for which education exists.

### *The Survey Course*

This committee is not inclined to place much faith in what is usually understood by a "survey" course in high school. Survey courses are arranged and conducted in very different ways. Sometimes the student is given a chronological conspectus of a single national literature, sometimes a representative sampling of various literary types, sometimes an ambitious view of world literature or a history of civilization. The differences are many, but the dangers are the same. The survey course must almost necessarily depend on a large anthology representing a considerable number of authors by snippets and patches. The invitation to haste and superficiality is obvious. The pupil comes to feel that literature consists of excerpts, and makes little or no acquaintance with works of any extent studied as a whole and in the light of the author's entire design. An excess of literary history is substituted for the actual study of literature; the student learns *about* books instead of reading them attentively for himself. Worst of all, the learner has little or no opportunity to grow by personal reflection and adventure in the attempt to understand and judge questions of value for himself. The stereotyped judgments of the textbook, reinforced by the teacher, are impressed

on him authoritatively, as though questions of value were already closed and could be treated only as occasions for dogma. The pupil's attention is drawn to the abstract, to the frigid academic catalogue of "influences" and "tendencies," instead of concentrating on the design and the details of the work immediately before him, and from this concrete work proceeding inductively toward the problems of literary definition and criticism.

But if the survey course should in general be reserved for college, when the student is ready to begin the systematic study of some considerable body of literature, it is, with all its dangers, one way of meeting two important purposes. It may help the student to perceive literature as a continuity, not to be understood without some historical perspective; and it does guarantee that the pupil will be exposed to some of the great writers, even if he meets them only through fragments. It seems to the committee that each of these essential purposes will be best met by a course, whether chronologically arranged or whether called a "survey" or not, which devotes itself to the study and discussion of a limited number of complete representative works by writers important to our literary tradition, with the inclusion of some contemporary literature as well. The survey course based on a large anthology, in which a great many writers appear only in fragments, is a very imperfect solution of the problem of the choice of reading in the secondary school.

### *Literature as Art*

The teacher's constant aim is to interest his students in reading the best that they can master, to open literature to them as a realm of vivid experiences, exciting and enjoyable. Whatever intellectual and ethical value literature may have in education will only be quickened when students like to read and find some relation between their reading and their lives. This means that literature must be taught as an art; its intellectual and ethical value hinges on its aesthetic value, and this comes to life through pleasure. If the student is to enjoy litera-

ture as an art in any full sense, he must have some perception into literary skill; he must take some steps toward the appreciation of formal beauty and technical proficiency. But there is reason to think that instruction in form and technique is all too often arid and artificial, that it alienates pupils from literature rather than arousing their interest in it. Probably the reason is that form and technique are too commonly divorced from the content of the book the student is reading. The youngster is asked to locate the "climax" of a play according to the ideas of the teacher or the formulas of a textbook. Or he is asked to make a graph or diagram of the plot of a short story. Not unnaturally, he comes to feel that a play must have a formal "climax" regardless of what it is about or of the author's purpose. He feels that an abstract diagram of plot is in some way a test of the merits of a story, and he is impatient and resentful toward a story that does not lend itself to a neat graph. In the end he may subconsciously decide that literary criticism and appreciation are obscure ritualistic exercises, by which credit is earned in English classes; he is actually blinded to what he reads and prevented from getting at either its substance or the skill of its design. Perhaps the worst havoc of this kind is wreaked on poetry. The student is given definitions of the various figures of speech, and poetry is then offered to him as a jungle in which to track down metaphor and metonymy, so that he may bring home his specimens in triumph for the approving teacher.

All this is by no means written to decry the proper use and study of technique and technical terms, which are as indispensable to literary inquiry as a proper technical language is to the study of marine engines or chemistry or mathematics. There is no reason to suppose that Americans are incapable of seeing the point of literary terminology; they can take it in their stride if they are making actual progress in understanding the content and purpose of what they are asked to read. American students of the other arts naturally absorb the technical terms they need as they make progress in the art itself. They know the technique of swing music, and absorb its

jargon as readily as they take oxygen into their blood. They can deal with such terms as *schottische* or *chiaroscuro* if they are studying older dance forms or painting. Why do they not get on as naturally with poetry and its relevant terms and classifications? One important reason may well be that formalized textbooks and unfortunate attitudes in teaching have been too long in the field, and have divorced literary terminology and supposed technical study from the content of the books the students read and from the experiments in practice and form which new generations of writers are always making in relation to new or changing purposes and ways of looking at experience.

A writer's skill can be only imperfectly appreciated by a reader who has not understood his purpose or grasped his content; the content of a work will not fully come alive for the reader who remains insensitive to skill. Content and form, substance and technique, are not to be separated from each other beyond a certain artificial point. The study of the two must proceed together, and each must help the other. The student who listens to recordings of music in older dance forms and enjoys them will delight in learning to discriminate between *schottische* and minuet and in calling each by its right name. It will be quite clear to him that the minuet does not exist simply to be called a minuet. But the hapless student of poetry is often allowed to feel that the "Ode to the West Wind" exists so that he can prove his acquaintance with metaphor or *terza rima*. This is not a necessary situation. The teacher of literature in the secondary school may well be advised to try the inductive approach with his students. When they have read a number of stories and poems, understood them as far as possible and derived an imaginative experience from them, they will be ready for some technical and critical discriminations. The teacher at this stage can begin calling attention to features of design and form, can establish the common classifications of literary types, of meters and verse forms, of rhetorical and narrative devices. The necessary terms and classifications can then be seen in their true relation

to what the student has read. Students have the capacity to be interested in design and sensitive to it; they will not be reluctant to notice and study the development of themes in an ode, the relation of parts in a story, the structure of a play, when it is clear that the perception of formal design will increase their understanding and pleasure.

### *Critical Terminology*

These considerations bring up the question of the place of literary criticism in the secondary school. The topic has already been discussed in relation to the teaching of composition, but some further remarks will be relevant. The important point is that the more pretentious terms of literary classification and judgment involve abstraction at a difficult level and imply perceptions and verdicts that are always subject to controversy. The student who thinks that such a term as "romantic" or "realistic" denotes a clearly fixed category of literature about which everyone agrees has simply been blinded to the facts. One of the worst results of anthology and textbook education is the habit of regarding summary and dogmatic labels as the proper and necessary end of critical inquiry. The secondary school teacher has an opportunity, both in dealing with composition and in dealing with literature, to give the student the valuable experience of noticing how general and technical terms originate and what they represent. The term "sonnet," when it means a particular verse form with certain definite metrical specifications, is a term of exact classification, important only for purposes of classification. It will not settle the merits of any particular poem in this form; but as a term of classification its meaning is stable and will not vary from one context to another. "Romantic" and "realistic," on the other hand, do not denote stable and clear categories. Their meaning will vary from context to context. They will not tell the student, except within very vague limits, what to expect of a given book that he is invited to read, but rather what a given commentator has in mind when he uses these words, or what effect the book in question

had on the mind of a particular critic. Such words as "romantic" or "classic" do not settle questions of merit, but initiate them. They are terms that must be explored afresh almost every time they are encountered. They are convenient for summarizing a large number of detailed perceptions, tastes, personal responses which the writer assumes that his reader understands and shares; but the reader must often make a special effort to detect all these personal perceptions and responses, or he will be misled by the use of the general term. The reader's understanding of the term may correspond very imperfectly with the writer's. What is "realistic" to one man is fantastic to another; what is "realistic" to the literary historian, with his eye on the development of tradition, may seem to the unguarded student as fabulous as Prester John. These terms should not be taught to students *a priori*, as though the questions they involve had all been settled and the results authoritatively established. They may very well be introduced to start discussion, to expose and not to conceal differences of personal response, so that the implied principles of judgment may gradually be clarified. And especially they may be introduced in illustration of some of the problems of definition and of abstract and general language.

Literary criticism implies both an attempt to understand a work, to discern and state its content and its formal characteristics, and an attempt to judge its merits. On both scores the work of the critic is difficult and controversial. It presupposes wide reading and mature reflection. Criticism of literature in any mature sense is beyond the range of the secondary school pupil. The inexperienced scholar is on particularly dangerous ground when he is encouraged to pronounce aesthetic judgments, verdicts on style and technical proficiency. His natural resource is to parrot the phrases of the teacher, the clichés of the textbook, the blurb on the jacket if the book is new, or the cant of the review columns if he is persistent enough to look them up. The parrot phrases of which so many high school book-reports consist are an obstacle to intellectual development; they encourage the view

that literary discussion is a game of pretense in which the stake is the approval of someone mysteriously in the know. Book reports written according to a prescribed and standardized formula are a particularly fertile source of these abuses.

All this is not to say that students should not express their opinions, oral and written, about the books they read. They obviously should. But the teacher should see to it that the opinions are honest, no matter how horrifying they may be in the light of inherited canons. The teacher should fend off parroted judgments and second-hand phrases, and should put the emphasis of critical discussion largely on the problem of ascertaining to the fullest possible extent the meaning and structure of the work under consideration. It is important that the student should be led also by degrees toward increasing appreciation of the writer's formal mastery or technical proficiency. What is to be avoided is the bandying about of immature aesthetic verdicts as though in themselves they represented important achievements. The teacher's task is to promote understanding. Wisely used, literary criticism is a valuable agent in this work; unwisely used, it will actually become an obstacle. The teacher with no critical sense of his own, the teacher who has not read widely and reflected maturely in his own right on the problems of critical judgment, can hardly hope to advance his students in critical understanding. It is to be feared that the present training of secondary school teachers does not do much to help them acquire a mature and independent critical sense. College training in English has an important responsibility in this respect. Teachers who combine enthusiasm for literature with an exacting personal standard of intellectual and aesthetic judgment are much needed.

The traditional place occupied by the study of literature in American education corresponds with the important trust that the wise teaching of literature can fulfil. To the extent that knowledge of our literary heritage is impaired, the nation will be impoverished intellectually, aesthetically, and ethically. The ideal of humanistic teaching that would combine these

three great strands of men's experience and effort in the study of literature may seem unrealistic or unduly ambitious when we survey the actual conditions of the secondary school system at the present day. But when we remember that education is a progress from the less to the more difficult, from immaturity and inexperience, even of the crudest sort, to greater maturity and growing experience, we may regain confidence. Exceptional teachers have proved that very unpromising classes can be led to an affection for the great writers; and no one will deny that this is an important achievement and satisfaction, both for the pupil and for the society in which he is to be a citizen.

If some of these considerations seem remote from the interests of children, they are fundamental to national culture. In concluding this chapter, however, the committee desires to return briefly to a more elementary problem, one that has been several times touched upon in these pages, and in returning, to indicate its desire not to be merely theoretical. We communicate through words. Accuracy of communication is essential to the operation of our society. We believe that the teaching of literature is one of the highest purposes — perhaps the highest purpose — of English instruction. But literature cannot be effectively taught if the channels of communication are clogged. The plain ability to read and the plain ability to listen intelligently when others speak or read aloud are as essential elements in general education as the plain ability to write with reasonable competence. Preferably, these abilities should have been generally acquired before the level of the "senior" high school. That they are not always so acquired is patent. That it is often the business of the English teacher to teach these acquirements at some level of school instruction and that, at any level where they are necessary to advanced work, the inability to read, to listen intelligently, and to write makes instruction in literature or creative writing ineffective is patent. But this whole area of learning needs greatly to be clarified; and until competent investigation has revealed the springs and sources of difficulty, until much



that is superficial and sentimental about "reading" has been put aside in the interest of an effective psychology of learning, the committee is unable to see what contribution it can make. It can merely note the complexity of the problem, insist that it is a general "school" problem as well as an English problem, and declare that English teachers, though they should aid in its solution, should not sacrifice for this excellent purpose their special abilities for the teaching of literature.

## V

# BASIC NEEDS AND COURSES IN EDUCATION

TURNING now from the consideration of English as a subject to a discussion of the pedagogical features of the professional preparation of teachers of English, the committee finds itself face to face with a condition which cannot immediately be altered. In order to teach at all in American public schools — and equally in private schools which operate under certain regional associations — young men and women must meet state requirements for certification. These requirements cover the amounts, and in some cases the specific subjects to be included within the designated totals, of semester-hour credit to be earned in the study of education. It does not seem to the committee useful at this point to go into the history of these requirements or to discuss their administration at the hands of officers of state departments of education. To modify the general system of state certification would be a long-time undertaking. What can or should be attempted in this direction may well be left for later consideration by some cooperative body of more permanent character than the committee presently reporting. It is important here, however, to note the character of these state requirements. Accordingly, the following summary statement is presented.

### SUMMARY

#### *Of Requirements for Certification for Public School Teaching*

##### *Degrees*

All states require the bachelor's degree or four years of study on the college level for high school teachers.

[Massachusetts alone has state requirements only for state-aided schools]

Six states and the District of Columbia require work beyond the A.B.

Five \* demand one year, or the master's degree, or 30 hours of graduate study; one (D.C.), the master's degree or 5 years' experience; one (Oregon) 20 hours of graduate study.

### *Professional Training*

All states (except Massachusetts for local schools) require work in Education.

One (Louisiana) requires only 8 hours

Three (Alabama, New Hampshire, Vermont) require 12 hours

Thirteen require 15-16 hours

Twenty-two require 18 hours

Four require from 18 to 24 hours

Five require from 24 to 27 hours

Thirty-nine states require practice teaching under supervision. All states but Maine (and Massachusetts for local schools) require particular courses or distribution of courses in Education.

### *Subject To Be Taught*

Thirty-seven states require a college "major" (18 to 36 hours) in the subject to be taught, and a minor (9 to 20 hours) in additional teaching fields.

Nineteen states require particular courses or combinations of these in the undergraduate program as assurance of a "liberal arts" background.

Ten \*\* of these define a necessary college program in terms not met by the usual Harvard College program. E.g., in New Jersey these are basic to a "liberal education": English, 12 hours; Social Studies, 12 hours; Science, 6 hours.

The usual Harvard undergraduate program, if it included 3 half-courses in education, when supplemented by one summer term of work in education, would qualify most candidates for teaching only in the high schools of Massachusetts and two other states. If six weeks of summer work were taken elsewhere (in the states in which certification was sought) two other states would be open. If practice teaching were included in the Harvard under-

\* Arizona, California, Kentucky, New York, Washington.

\*\* Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, West Virginia.

graduate-plus-summer program, about forty states would usually be open, the number depending on other factors.

It will be noted that the prospective teacher of English ought to study education for at least a half-year if he wishes to be certified to teach; and that he would be better advised to study education for four-fifths of a year. This is a conclusion of no rational moment, since it is based entirely on the formal recognition of the practical expediency of getting certified. What can be said in reasonable justification of any specified aspects of pedagogical study?

In presenting the possible value of courses in education, the committee has kept clearly in mind the preparation of *teachers*; what should be done for administration or specialists is another story. Furthermore, the committee makes the assumption — perhaps not wholly admissible in this discussion — that the courses here reviewed will be taught by men sympathetic to the general conclusions heretofore advanced with respect to the values at stake in the teaching of English — and that the courses themselves will be taught at least as well, on the average, as the courses in English and other academic subjects which the students take in college. On no other assumptions can courses in education for prospective teachers of English be recommended at all.

*Educational Psychology* is almost universally required for certification. Its substantive value lies in the opportunity it affords for clearing the student's mind of vague or mistaken notions about human learning and mental and physical growth. In spite of the fact that we have all gone through the processes of growth and learning, no one who expects to deal successfully with the young as learners can afford to enter upon his work without direct and systematic study of the ways in which learning takes place from stage to stage in childhood and youth — more especially during adolescence. Some of the literature students of English are almost certain to read may itself contribute to confusion or lack of balance in the student's views on motives, techniques, and values in learning. Matthew Arnold may, for example, provide inspiration for

certain types of high school work in literature, but the prospective English teacher would do well to correct such views of the mind as he may have acquired from Arnold, by the study of educational psychology in its full modern development. This field can now present in an orderly and illuminating fashion an array of facts to be known and conclusions to be examined — together with certain hypotheses about which there is still much controversy — which can leave no interested student naively unaware of principles and problems which a guide and director of learning ought to understand. How individuals differ in their ability to learn; how subjects and aspects of subject matter differ in their challenge to learning and their demands on the learner; how learning proceeds from situation to situation as the learner carries on his task from beginning to end at any stage and from one stage to another; what obstacles are to be overcome and how; the place and importance of interest, motives extrinsic and intrinsic, rewards and deterrents, competition and cooperation, invention and discovery, routine and drill; and the possibility of generalization, reasoning, and the apprehension of ends in personalities of differing type: these are some of the major areas of inquiry in educational psychology. The student should find in this field the beginnings of an increasing penetration into the difficulties of the learner in English and in all those subjects with which English is necessarily related — and, more important, an understanding of the total situation of youth at school and in life. Educational psychology is not, of course, the sole means by which such understanding may be attained; but it is an indispensable means for adding to general sympathy with the younger learner and to clear ideals as to the goals for which he should strive, a technical specification and a detailed relation to the various aspects and phases of the processes of learning and of growth.

*Philosophy of Education* is usually required, under one name or another, for certification. Its substantive value is no less definite than that of educational psychology, but it may be achieved in several possible ways. In general terms, what

is to be sought in this field is an understanding of the place of education as a factor in civilization. Some minds may best come at this understanding through the history of education. It should hardly be necessary here to expound the possibility of enlargement and inspiration for teachers which may be realized by effective historical study of educational thought and educational practice. Another approach is through comparative education; and for some students the study of national systems and their moving ideals is the best means of raising the mind to a large grasp of educational aims and purposes. The direct analytical attack is a third approach to this objective. In any case the student ought to find in whatever course he takes under this head an opportunity to become critically aware of the moving ideas about education as a whole which operate in his own mind and in the organized groups he is about to enter. It should never be forgotten that a teacher is called upon to act thoughtfully and responsibly not only in his classroom but also in departmental groups and in faculties within his school or school system, and on professional committees, and in teachers' associations, and in civic bodies wherein he stands inevitably as a professional. If his views on education as a part of civilized life and a factor in its maintenance and advancement are unsystematic and uncritical, he courts failure in these relationships — or at least he will have no positive influence. Full philosophic agreement in the profession of education is not to be expected, if indeed it is even to be desired: but the profession should not be submerged in ignorance of its own larger relationships and issues. The value of introductory study in the field here in question lies mainly in its possible effect in starting the student toward a truly professional career in a vocation all too easily narrowed to routines, overcome by political pressures, or diverted from high purposes by the self-regarding motives of its own organized groups.

*Secondary Education* is frequently specified for certification. Its substantive value lies in the orientation it provides for teachers in secondary schools upon the institution in which

they are to work. The American high school cannot be understood by a college graduate merely because he himself was once a pupil in a high school. The institution has a history. It is facing, and seeking to solve under definite administrative leadership, problems which arise out of the economic, political, and cultural situation in the United States — and increasingly, also, out of the international situation. A teacher must know in general terms what a principal, a superintendent, and a school committee member ought to know in greater detail and with a more technical — but not on that account a more mystical or esoteric — understanding. Furthermore, one teacher ought to know what the other teacher is about. The curriculum as a whole ought not to be a mystery to a teacher of English. Nor should he or any teacher have only a “practical” view, picked up by casual contacts on the job, of health programs, guidance, school activities, and other major features of school life outside the classroom. A conspectus on all these matters, in terms of their theory as well as their practice, is essential to the teacher who cares to follow his career in a professional spirit.

*Principles of Teaching*, with supervised practice, is required in thirty-nine states. Its substantive value is obvious. No amount of knowledge of his subject can do for a young teacher what supervision under a competent and friendly master of the art of teaching can do for him. Nor can any theoretical understanding of education take the place of supervised practice. It is not always noted, however, that supervision of an apprenticeship in the complex art of the teacher can itself be fully effective only when the student and his supervisor share some common understandings as to the art itself. They do not need to be in complete agreement, nor to have surveyed the entire field; but the young teacher must not be subjected to supervision under the burden of a fear-some ignorance as to the theory of teaching entertained by his critic and guide. Supervision without some sharing of ideas becomes a contest of wits or a process of mere inspection and appraisal in which the criteria of judgment remain

both unrevealed and threatening in their obscurity. Supervision of practice is inevitably in part a process of testing; the supervisor's judgments are a matter of record: it is only fair to the student that he should have an opportunity, before his first teaching and while he continues in practice, to discuss with his supervisor the theory of teaching as it is conditioned by subject, by pupils, by institutional circumstances, and by educational ideals. Into the course in principles of teaching every factor which makes the actual conduct and direction of learning what it may be, can be, or must be under the conditions obtaining now and in the immediate future will be introduced. If the course succeeds the beginner emerges as a practical idealist who has taken at least one step toward the "passionate patience" he must later acquire.

*Educational Measurement* is not often specified for certification. Its substantive value, however, is of a high order. One can be scornful of testing and statistics in education only if he knows nothing about them. One who has little knowledge of these recent developments is likely, on the other hand, to stand unduly in awe of them. Teachers need not become experts in testing, but no teacher should enter upon his career in these times without an adequate knowledge of the theory of educational and psychological measurement, both as to its limitations and as to its values. Only a sound introduction to this field can give a beginner in teaching the basis he should have for estimating the importance of conclusions derived from tests and scores, for interpreting the performance of individual pupils of his own (or classes under his care) on tests in his subject and related subjects, for understanding the relation of one set of scores to another in terms of coefficients or curves, and for constructing useful tests for his own use. Extremes and absurdities in testing are of course amusing; but if a teacher's interest in this field is confined to poking fun at its superficialities and excesses, he is likely before long to find himself exposed to justifiable accusations of an unfortunate limitation in his own professional equipment.

*The Teaching of English* is required in some states (for



certification to teach English) under the head of "Methods." The substantive value of a course on the teaching of any subject is unfortunately obscured by calling the course a "methods course." The conception of the education of a teacher which was embodied in the American normal schools of the 19th century — subject matter "review" plus a study of devices for the presentation of the subject matter; in other words, "methods" — is no longer in any respect satisfactory. But a course which becomes the arena for discussion — even for contest among opposing points of view — concerning the work to be done in English under varying circumstances may prove to be a valuable experience for the beginner in teaching (and perhaps even more for a teacher of some experience who has had but little professional study). And most valuable in this — that his study of English and his study of education may be synthesized in such a course as in no other part of his preparation. If the course deals only with devices, it will be of no great value. The course should deal with values, ideals, conceptions, and general principles — including new proposals (some of them apparently radical) such as those discussed in the present document — and it should likewise deal in some measure with the highly practical matter of planning in detail the instruction actually entrusted to the student as an apprentice teacher.

If a student is clear as to his professional purpose, there should be no lack of interest for him in the study of education as it is here defined. Educational psychology ought to be of value to many students in their own learning. The philosophy of education will be poorly taught if it does not add substantially to their understanding of history and of the contemporary social situation. The other courses here suggested have values less general, although the course in secondary education often opens the minds of students in a new and impressive way to social problems they had heard about but hardly faced in any realistic sense. In any case, a student of English whose work in education has covered the fields here enumerated may be sure of certification; and in the progress

of his studies in these pedagogical areas his own ability and promise as a professional worker ought to declare themselves beyond reasonable doubt. It seems to the committee desirable to include all the subjects described above. Each may be compassed in the usual half-course, except that the supervised practice must be given the time and credit assigned to a full course. The program here proposed amounts, therefore, to a minimum of three quarters of a year of systematic study.

## VI

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. HARVARD AND THE PRIVATE PREPARATORY SCHOOLS

THIS report has taken shape chiefly in terms of public education in the United States. Little has been said of the private preparatory schools. As this document draws to its end, as practical inferences concerning a program for Harvard University begin to emerge, some discussion of the private schools may be expected. For generations Harvard men have gone out to teach in these institutions and for generations private school graduates have been coming to Cambridge. The relations of Harvard College with the private schools are of long standing and constitute one of the most important, valuable, and stabilizing influences in Harvard history. So far as any general truths enunciated by the committee are acceptable to the world of education, they apply as well to the private schools as to the high schools. Naturally, Harvard University will continue to take advantage as long and as fully as possible of a stable tradition which has meant and still means much to the success of its educational task. But while the committee is not disposed to prophesy what may lie in store for the privately endowed preparatory school, institutions of this sort, like all privately endowed institutions including Harvard, face an uncertain future darkened by the shadow of war.

The committee has held uniformly to the principle that democracy in education is not synonymous with uniformity in education. Whatever changes may come to our privately endowed schools, it seems in every way probable that they will continue to be favorable centers for educational experi-

mentation and progress. Hitherto, the privately endowed college has encouraged experimentation impossible in state-supported institutions. In the same way, privately supported preparatory schools have been able to act as proving grounds for new content and new methods with a liberty impossible to great city school systems or high schools of limited resources in rural districts or small towns. Harvard University has every hope and confidence that it may continue to look to the private schools for this, and other invaluable contributions to the national educational life. If the committee's treatment of the private schools has been thus brief and cursory, it is because the particular task of this report has been to consider problems which affect the 93 per cent of the nation's pupils who are in public secondary schools, rather than the seven per cent who are in its private schools.

#### B. HARVARD'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

The complex problem before the committee, it must by now be apparent, is not characteristically that of the private preparatory school but rather that of the public high school. And it is increasingly evident with every passing month that if the Harvard student body has ever been wholly or principally composed of boys from the preparatory schools, that era is over. The instituting of national scholarships can only mean that Harvard is reaching out into the educational system of the nation rather than resting contentedly upon a portion of that system only. As Harvard graduates multiply, as Harvard clubs over the United States establish funds to send boys from distant commonwealths to Harvard College, the number, variety, and importance of high school graduates in the Harvard scheme of things are bound to increase.

Moreover, the concept of Harvard as a national university carries with it vast consequences, the implications of which are only beginning to appear. If, as is sometimes alleged, Harvard has in the past seemed to be indifferent towards, or superior to, the public school systems of the nation, that era, too, is over. The mere selfish need of survival demands that

Harvard shall strengthen its relations with the high schools, even if no higher reason be alleged. Fortunately, however, the animal instinct to survive is an insufficient definition of the Harvard mind; and it is, we think, characteristic of the nobler parts of the Harvard tradition that a desire to shoulder our full share of responsibility for the intellectual health of the nation is characteristic of our educational outlook. Harvard cannot become a national university and also turn on the national educational system only the blank face of Harvard indifference. There are many indications, both among its administrative officers and among its faculties, of a real concern that Harvard shall not remain aloof and apart from this vast problem.

A distinguished intellectual exile from Europe remarked in the hearing of a member of the committee that we in the United States are doing a good job at two extremes of the educational system; namely, the grade schools, and the colleges and universities. But, he added thoughtfully, you are not doing a good job at the level of the secondary schools, and unless you do a better job, your democracy will not survive. The faults he alleged were a lack of moral rigor, a lack of intellectual strength, a sentimental confusion of laudable aims with inefficient means, an emotional rather than a thoughtful solution of the problem of training citizens. Even if his observation be but partially correct, Harvard University, like every other institution of learning in the country, is under deep and immediate obligations to do all it can to improve the quality of secondary education in the public school systems of the United States.

But though we may accept the obligation in principle, acceptance does not of itself obliterate our special difficulties. For better or worse, Harvard enjoys a reputation of at least *having been* indifferent to the national educational problem. For better or worse, Harvard enjoys a reputation of being an expensive institution to attend — and the younger generation is not going to be able to spend, or to have spent on them, the sums which parents have hitherto poured out in their

behalf. Moreover, Harvard is on the extreme eastern shore of the republic; and albeit the center of population in this country is still very far east of the geographical center, it is also true that excellent institutions lie much nearer the sources of origin of secondary school teachers than does Harvard. All these are real difficulties in attracting to Harvard good candidates for teacher-training. The committee does not say that these obstacles cannot be overcome — national scholarships have overcome similar obstacles. But the committee points out that these obstacles exist. We cannot expect miraculously to turn a regiment of candidates for teacher-training toward Harvard overnight.

### C. TEACHER-TRAINING AND THE FACULTY

If the training of teachers for secondary education is to be effective at Harvard, difficulties of another sort must also be squarely faced. The training of teachers means that candidates must absorb all they can of three fundamental elements: a knowledge of subject matter, a knowledge of the psychology of learning in the pupils whom they are to teach, and a knowledge of the social setting and social significance of the institution in which the teaching is to be done. The inculcation of subject matter rests with the several departments which make up Harvard College and with associated portions of the University that might conceivably be useful. But the inculcation of subject matter cannot be done in a vacuum and without reference to the professional uses to which the candidate is to put the command of subject matter he has acquired. The committee has already commented upon a certain remoteness of the Harvard faculty from the public schools of the country and has suggested that professors who continue to think about high schools in terms of the high school of a quarter of a century ago are out of touch with reality. It seems to us important that departments at Harvard concerned with teacher-training must become more aware of problems in secondary education; must, as it were, deliberately re-orient and re-educate themselves, not only with reference to the past train-

ing of undergraduates who come to them but also with reference to the training of those who are going out to create future undergraduates. The committee believes that each department so concerned would be well advised to designate one or more of its members as agents or representatives specially charged with acquiring information about the secondary schools and with transmitting this information in useful form to the department, having in mind both the question of undergraduate preparation and the question of training secondary teachers in their subject. It seems to us idle to suppose that Harvard can make a real contribution to public education unless concern for public education is widely shared by members of its faculty and by the departments. So long as Harvard's share in teacher-training is supposed by a majority of Harvard professors to be solely the concern of a few specially designated persons, so long will Harvard fail to rise to the height of its great task. Two arguments, it seems to us, should here appeal. In the first place, Harvard undergraduate education can, in one sense, rise no higher than the previous preparation of these undergraduates permits it to rise; and if the previous preparation of undergraduates is to be improved, members of the Harvard faculty will have to help in that improvement by sympathetically aiding all attempts to increase the number of well-trained high school teachers whom Harvard sends out. In the second place, in a larger sense, Harvard education can rise no higher than the national educational level will permit it to rise; and if the national educational level is to rise, Harvard shares with all other colleges, whether privately endowed or publicly supported, an immense obligation to aid in that advance. Only in proportion as the several departments are truly made aware of the problem of secondary education in its national aspects can fruitful changes be made in curricula relevant to teacher-training. Aimless experimentation in a vacuum only delays practical solutions of the problem of teacher-training.

If indifference or ignorance about secondary education may in some degree be charged against the Harvard faculty

(and the ignorance of the committee has been vast and is scarcely diminished), another general difficulty in creating good programs for training teachers is the peculiar status of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Into the events which led to creating such a graduate school the committee has no desire to enter; it is enough to know that it exists. Insofar as the presence of a graduate school of education permits Harvard to train school administrators, specialists in educational research, or broadly educated professors of educational subjects, its existence is amply justified, and a contribution is made. But this advantage carries with it inevitable defects where the training of secondary school teachers is concerned. Many reasons are alleged for the relative failure of the existing program leading to the M.A. in Teaching, but the committee is impressed by what seems to some of its members, at least, an initial fallacy in the whole scheme; the fallacy, namely, that training in education is something that can be applied from above at the end of another program; that it is training which in a fifth year can miraculously be clapped on top of a four-year Bachelor of Arts degree pursued without reference to the vocation of teaching. The result is not fusion, but confusion. Skilled teachers are not thus made out of raw material. Having spent four years in learning, for example, all that he can about English, the candidate is, under the existing scheme, suddenly expected to switch most of his attention to training in education. His English courses, in all probability, had no such end in view; and, because of the covert hostility between subject matter teachers and teachers of education, it is at least possible that he has been advised to avoid courses in subject matter which, in the opinion of educational specialists, would really aid him in his preparation for high school teaching. On the other hand, the faculty in education, naturally impatient with the blank indifference of the subject matter department towards the vital problems *they* envisage, is inclined to view subject matter in the fifth year of the student's work as a necessary evil and to insist upon the necessity of crowding into nine months of "graduate" work all the



professional training they can give the candidate. Whereas subject matter courses had been chosen with little regard to the candidate's professional needs, a bewildering insistence upon "getting up" professional training (itself often meaningless to a candidate who has not taught) now makes the future teacher long impatiently for the security of subject matter courses, the ways and purposes of which have become habitual to him.

Here the only sensible solution, it seems to us, is to permit the two elements in teacher-training to ripen together over a longer interval; to drop as many courses in education downward into undergraduate training as may seem wise, and to lift upward into the fifth year, as an accompaniment to the final work in education, appropriate and valuable courses in subject matter. If this recommendation requires changes in the status of the graduate faculty in education, it seems to the committee more important to accommodate the pattern of courses to human growth — to the best personal and professional development — than to insist that, because "education" at Harvard is confined to a graduate school, it shall never descend to a level where the process of interpreting subject matter can be fused with professional training from the moment the student chooses his career.

All this implies, of course, that the candidate for teacher-training shall be expected to think about his future profession at an earlier date than that now represented by a B.A. degree. Doctors, lawyers, chemists, army officers, and various other professional men have wisely decided that if professional training is to be sound, it must be begun before the graduate school or its equivalent level is reached. Why should the delicate and complex profession of teaching be something that can be entered upon hit or miss merely because the candidate decides, after graduating from college, that he would like to teach? It is our belief that the choice of a teaching career should be made at least by the beginning of the student's junior year and that the two last years of undergraduate study and the present graduate year (now principally spent

in the School of Education) should be thought of as a single three-year preparatory program, based upon the two first years of general college work. If some such scheme were adopted, a given department — for example, the department of English — could then, in consultation with experts in education and with its own members specially charged with keeping up contacts with the high schools, work out a curriculum in subject matter which would fit a curriculum in education, to the mutual advantage of both departments and to the eventual improvement of candidates and, we hope, education at the secondary level.

Obligation to re-think its problem also rests, however, upon the Graduate School of Education. Being but human, undergraduates entering upon a teacher-training program in the past have been sometimes repelled by what seemed to them meaningless demands in education courses. "Meaningless," however, is sometimes the result of being suddenly taken away from the discipline of subject and, with equal suddenness, being immersed in the discipline of education. Fortunately, the faculty in education has recently been re-examining its courses and its methods with a view to arriving at an approach at once philosophic and practical to the complex problem of training teachers. The result will undoubtedly be a more compressed and efficient pattern of training. We do not think that one can ripen a prospective teacher by hot-house methods, and we do not mean to imply that acceleration is a virtue in itself. But we note with pleasure the interest of the faculty of education in the improvement of course work, having in view a compactness of substantive material and the value of education in liberal culture.

If the Graduate School of Education is to be of real use, it must not merely move with the times, it must lead the times. This can only mean that it must participate in the general policy of this university with reference to the securing and retaining of outstanding men in its field. The School of Education cannot stand still. It cannot be allowed to lapse into mediocrity, since a mediocre faculty never yet created supe-

rior teachers. Nothing was more clearly evident as a result of the tours made by members of this committee over the country than the belief of many that the Harvard Graduate School of Education has the opportunity of a unique and real contribution to educational policy in the country, provided it has the equipment and the personnel to translate potentialities into a program.

Probably representatives of the school or department of education and representatives of the sciences, the humanities, and the social studies will eye each other with suspicion to the last syllable of recorded time. It is not necessary, however, that either party to this ancient educational controversy shall sign a blanket endorsement of all that the other does in order for fruitful cooperation to be reached. The history of this committee is proof that, confronting the vast educational dilemma of our time, representatives of "pedagogy" and representatives of "subject matter" can reason profitably together. If competent representatives of the Graduate School of Education participated more actively in the work of the several relevant departments of Harvard College; if sympathetic representatives of the "subject matter" departments participated more actively in the educational counsels of their pedagogical enemies, we think that much misunderstanding would disappear and that the consciousness of a common aim would in the long run triumph over existing jealousies. Indeed, we are pleased to observe that the Administrative Board for the M.A. in Teaching has already recommended to the President of Harvard University that it be reconstituted to consist of advisers from the several departments interested in the training of teachers. This is a practical step in the right direction.

Such devices, however, will lead nowhere unless they become the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. In the appalling situation before the world, nothing is gained among educators by persisting in the ancient, if pleasurable, habit of calling names. If the liberal state is to survive, members of the educational faculty, though they have a great deal of pertinent information about the psychology of learn-

ing, cannot, alone and unaided, create an appropriate pattern of secondary education. If democracy is to conquer, scientist and scholar, though they are storehouses of information of value to the state, cannot really put their information to work unless at least the rudiments of what they know are made available to as many future citizens as possible; and the inability of the academic world to communicate in simple terms with the laity suggests that learning and science need for this task all the help that expert pedagogy and psychological insight can give. We in the college world sometimes forget that we represent but a tiny fraction of the American nation. Only by continually reminding ourselves that the primary educational agency of the republic is the public school system shall we understand that high schools do not exist merely as miniature colleges and that their primary function is not the production of a given quota of Phi Beta Kappa scholars. The world of professional education, which has been struggling to understand and to analyze one of the hugest educational projects world history has ever seen, has something of importance to say to the academic faculty about ordinary children from ordinary homes; and the academic faculty, struggling to master, to organize, and to communicate the vastest amount of learning ever known, has something to say to the professional educator about the end and aim of education in the liberal state. The two halves of the equation must be kept together if an answer is to be found.

#### D. THE TRAINING OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

These general considerations may seem remote from the practical question which incited this study: how shall Harvard best train teachers of English for the secondary school? But general considerations, it seems to us, are precisely what much discussion of teacher-training has lacked; and the counting of trees has meant that the importance and relation of the forest to other parts of the cultural terrain have been ignored. This report will have accomplished one of its main purposes if it helps to lift the whole question of teacher-training out of the

realm of professional controversy and inter-departmental commination into a larger region of philosophic discussion. This was our earliest aim, and it may prove — indeed, we hope that it shall prove — our best contribution.

As for practical reforms, these fall, it seems to us, into two general categories. (1) What can Harvard do in a general sense to stabilize and advance the teaching of English in the secondary schools? (2) What improvements can be made in the existing degree of Master of Arts in Teaching English?

(1) Our analysis of the ways and aims of English teaching in the secondary schools indicates the existence of a regrettable amount of confusion. We need not again labor the central place and importance of English as a high school study. The confusion into which thinking about English has fallen results, indeed, from general agreement as to its central importance, coupled with separatist views as to what should be taught, how it should be taught, and for what purpose it should be taught. Schools of education, administrators of educational systems, school boards, state superintendents of education, local groups of English teachers, the National Council of Teachers of English, textbook manufacturers, the newspapers, and the general public have all had their hand in mixing the brew. From this list we omit the colleges. College men here and there maintain fruitful contacts with organizations of teachers and with the public schools, but on the whole it may be said that college departments of English have retired from the fray. The breakdown of the college entrance readings in the English classics represents the ending of any real attempt by the colleges to say what shall be taught as texts in the public schools; and the lack of any generally agreed upon program in either oral English or written English has meant a similar failure — granting, for the moment, that college guidance is desirable — in these important areas.

That there is some degree of hostility between the high school world and the college world is patent. We have no desire to have the colleges re-enter the fray, as it were, only to be charged with a desire to “dominate” the secondary

schools. Were they so to dominate, the tail would wag the dog. On the other hand, the colleges and the universities have a great deal to offer the secondary school curriculum, not with the notion of creating college preparatory courses in it, but with the larger aim of enriching the American cultural tradition. As we have earlier indicated, there seems to be no good reason why any child competent to benefit from literature should be cut off from his cultural inheritance.

It is now a good many years since the privately endowed colleges have exhibited more than a passive interest in high school English. Yet they are in an excellent position to give judicious aid. They are not, like the state universities, subjected to entrance requirements laid down by laws over which they have no control. They are not, like the teachers colleges, involved in "educational" controversy. That they are supposed to be allied with the private preparatory schools is, indeed, true, so that any program proposed by them might be assailed as having meaning only for the upper class; but since the private colleges are turning for their students to the public high schools, this reproach, if it be a reproach, loses effectiveness. Moreover, to assume that the private preparatory schools have nothing to offer public education is as absurd as to assume that public education is none of Harvard's business.

In a field filled to overflowing with conferences, reports, commissions, and committees we hesitate to suggest the creation of another one. Yet in view of the desirability of maintaining the aims in oral and written English earlier suggested in this report; in view also of the principal consideration urged in our section upon literature in the high schools — namely, the need of a continuing tradition, of a sense of belonging to an historical process — is it utopian to suggest that, were a group of colleges, at the invitation of Harvard, to meet by delegates and to discuss these problems in conjunction with thoughtfully selected representatives of the secondary school faculties and of schools and departments of education, something might be accomplished in the way of clarifying ends

and of establishing means? We need, for example, to know what literary classics are proper at various levels of the secondary school. It is insufficient to make the sole criterion by which books are chosen either the subjective judgment of a teacher or the arbitrary dictum of a principal or superintendent. Values of civilization are involved no less than questions of educational measurement. What do we measure for? In a period when the very existence of the English-speaking peoples is at stake, American children cannot avoid the English and American classics merely because they are "hard." The colleges might contribute to such a discussion an evaluation of literary works in terms of their significance for the present day; the secondary schools might contribute their experience in teaching under a wide variety of conditions; and the educational experts might illumine the psychological ways and means by which intellectual growth can be aided. Differences between "reading" and "literature" could be made plain; differences between improving speech and "school-marring the language" ironed out; differences between "expression" and a steady concentration upon efficient prose become understandable. Certainly this would seem to be true: if the colleges, with all they have to contribute, stand aside from the debate over secondary-school aims and secondary-school teaching, the world of the secondary school and the seven million children who live in it stand in danger of being culturally and ideationally impoverished. We would deprecate the reinstituting of inflexible college entrance requirements as a criterion of high school English work as if "English" existed only to get into college; we would, on the contrary, in such a conference, have everyone forget, if he could, that colleges exist to be gotten into. What we desiderate is that the colleges shall bring to the common problem of secondary education all the light and leading they can give it in itself, not as preparation for a B.A. degree. Possibly this suggestion may seem both vague and visionary. But college and university departments of English are at present essentially cut off from real contact with public education and its problems. Our commission

might re-establish that lost connection. Such a commission, were it established, should in our judgment be a long-term job, properly financed and equipped with appropriate secretarial aid and research workers. We suggest that it would be a contribution of first importance to the future of high school education. As for its implications with respect to teacher-training, they are so obvious as to require no comment.\*

(2) Changes in the curriculum leading to the M.A. in the Teaching of English may be of two sorts: general alterations intended to affect all the programs leading to the degree in question, whatever the subject; and particular alterations in the special program in English.

In January, 1942, the committee was requested by the Administrative Board for the Master of Arts in Teaching to suggest any changes in the general program for the degree which seemed wise in the light of its investigations. The committee unanimously adopted the following recommendations:

1. It is the sense of this committee that the most effective teacher-training program which Harvard could administer at the present time would be a five-year program.

2. The committee urges the Administrative Board to explore the possibility of permitting students in their junior and senior years to take not more than three half-courses in education.

3. The committee believes that, whenever possible, each student's total program should be so arranged that at least half his fifth year may be devoted to courses in subject matter.

4. The committee believes it would be desirable for each department concerned with the preparation of teachers to outline an appropriate five-year program in its field, for the guidance both of Harvard (and Radcliffe) students and of students in other colleges intending to come to Harvard as candidates for the M.A. in Teaching.

The committee notes with pleasure that these recommenda-

\* A secondary, but important, object of such an inquiry would be to ascertain whether the job of the high school English teacher cannot be better defined, especially with relation to the work of other classes and with relation to "extra-curricular" responsibilities. See our discussion of this problem, *ante*, pp. 26 ff.



tions were adopted by the Administrative Board and later also adopted by the Harvard College faculty. The logic by which the committee reached these conclusions has, we trust, been made sufficiently clear.

This report has already noted with pleasure the recommendation of the Administrative Board for the M.A. in Teaching that it should be so reconstituted as to include all the advisers from the several departments concerned with teacher-training. This action is in line with the committee's belief, already sufficiently expressed, that both the faculty of the school of education and the faculty of Harvard College have as their joint aim the improvement of secondary education in the United States.\*

In this connection the committee notes that the physical separation of the "education" faculty from the "arts and sciences" faculty is, to some degree, unfortunate. If the administrative offices for the M.A. in Teaching could be moved closer to the administrative center of the university; if the advisory work for the degree did not require so much physical movement by the student over university property, the committee thinks that many small difficulties would quickly disappear and a sense of commonalty of interest might be developed. The intercommunity of educational purpose among the Dean of Harvard College, the Dean of the Graduate School and the Dean of the Faculty is expressed by their use of a building in common, and of adjoining offices which make informal conferences easy and natural. If the logic of this report be granted, improvement in the secondary schools is as much a common object of these officials and of the officials of the Graduate School of Education taken together as is any other large educational aim. To be sure, there is also some connection between the undergraduate college and subjects as remote as medicine or law, but the physical distance of the Law School from Harvard College, the physical distance of the Medical School from Harvard College does no damage to a common educational purpose. It may seem a small and trivial matter,

\* This action has since been taken by the President of Harvard University.

but the committee suggests that the physical distance which now separates the Faculty in Education from the Faculty in the Arts and Sciences helps to explain why these two bodies of teachers have drifted apart, and urges that, in administering the M.A. in Teaching as a joint program, the office of control be put in University Hall, even if one or two minor offices have to be moved out. Values of primary educational importance are at stake, and proximity and informality do much to alter prejudices and break down barriers.\*

Inasmuch as the program in education for all candidates must be very much alike, the members of this committee representing education have been asked to submit a useful minimum program. We suggest that the work in education required of candidates for the M.A. in Teaching should include the following elements:

1. A half-course in educational psychology
2. A half-course in the history of education, comparative education, or the social theory of education
3. A half-course in secondary education
4. A half-course in educational measurement
5. A course in teaching, accompanied by a practical apprenticeship
6. A half-course in the teaching of English.

With reference to the special subject of English the committee urges the consideration of the following basic program for Harvard (and Radcliffe) students.

1. Junior Division (Freshman and Sophomore Years)\*\*  
 English A or English A1  
 History 1 or History 42

\* Beginning with the spring of 1942, an office has been established in University Hall.

\*\* The committee calls attention to the requirement of Latin for entrance upon a Harvard B.A. program. It is a requirement heartily endorsed by the committee.

The committee also notes the need of adjusting this program to students transferring to Harvard (and Radcliffe) from other colleges, and to students entering as "graduates" from other institutions. This whole complicated matter cannot be settled out of hand, but the committee has confidence in the ability of the Administrative Board for the M.A. in Teaching to make those necessary accommodations in particular cases which will preserve the spirit of this program.

English 1

Two years of a foreign language

Other work in science, social studies, etc., sufficient to fill up a normal undergraduate program at this level.

## 2. Board Examination

At the end of his sophomore year, or as near thereto as may be, the candidate should appear personally before a board, constituted of appropriate members of the English department, a representative or representatives of the Graduate School of Education, and an appropriate administrative officer of the University; and this board, or a subcommittee of it, should endeavor to ascertain why the candidate wants to teach, and what his qualifications are likely to be. From this interview and from a written paper presently to be described the board should form its judgment of (a) the candidate's personality; (b) his "vocation" for teaching; (c) his command of good diction, clean-cut enunciation, and relatively fluent English; (d) his command of competent written English.

The paper in question should be an essay of suitable length by the candidate on a subject connected with English and/or education, set by the Board.

If in the opinion of a majority of the board the candidate should be admitted to the degree program, this admission should be made so that the candidate enters upon the teacher-training program as a junior. If in the opinion of a majority of the board the candidate is ill-advised to attempt to become a teacher of English in the secondary schools, he should be so informed; and if he persists in entering upon the program, a vote of three-fourths of the members of the board shall be sufficient to disbar him.

## 3. Senior Division (Junior and Senior Years)

English 7 (American literature, if not already taken)

History 5 (American history)

English 5 (the English novel)

English 23 (Shakespeare)

A half-course in public speaking (in cases where serious remedial work is necessary, a full course may be more appropriate) intended to improve the student's own speech; to make him conscious of the diction and speech mannerisms of others; and to instruct him in the rudiments of improving the speech of others in cases not involving pathological or psychological defects; and to enable him to distinguish cases requiring expert psychological or medical supervision from cases of mere slovenly speech.

A course or half-course in composition intended to assist the future teacher.

Three half-courses in education, as follows:

Educational Psychology 1

History of Education 3 or 4; or Comparative Education 1;  
or Philosophy of Education

Secondary Education 1

Enough other courses to fill out the usual requirement for a B.A. degree.

The student, having completed this program, should be permitted to take his bachelor's degree, if he so desires, his field of concentration being English and his program of concentration being that outlined above. His "honors thesis" should be an essay on a subject connected with his vocational interest, and his examining committee, if he stands an oral examination, should include one representative of the Faculty of Education.

#### 4. Graduate Division.

In his fifth year, the candidate should take the following courses in education:

Principles of Teaching 3-4, with practice teaching.

Educational Measurement 1

Teaching of English 1

and the following courses in English:

One-half course in the history and development of the English language

A course in Chaucer; or in the Renaissance, or in Milton and his period; or in the eighteenth century; or in the nineteenth century. (In these latter periods he may substitute appropriate work in American literature.)\*

The committee does not wish to legislate for the English department or for the Graduate School of Education or for the Administrative Board for the M.A. in Teaching. But its deliberations would be futile if it did not make its program of recommendations concrete. Such a program as that outlined may, indeed, require modification in detail, but it seems to the committee to fulfill these important requirements:

1. It demands that the future teacher in the secondary schools shall begin thinking and planning his career at a date

\* In modified form this program has recently been adopted by the Department of English and the Administrative Board for the M.A. in Teaching.

roughly analogous to that at which the future lawyer or doctor begins to plan his career.

2. It sets up a screen — imperfect, to be sure, but the only kind of screen which seems yet to have been invented for this purpose — whereby unfit material may be turned aside before waste and damage result.

3. The program of courses in education and the program of courses in English are here fitted into a three-year program which ought to permit a better fusion of subject matter and of professional training than that possible under the existing pattern for the M.A. in Teaching.

4. The possibility of a B.A. degree at the end of four years will permit the award of a diploma which, in case the candidate is dissatisfied or uneasy, gives him an honorable degree without, however, licensing him to teach.

5. The fifth year of the program is a natural outgrowth of the first two years. The final degree is a professional degree calculated to give the candidate an honorable place in the world of the public high schools.

6. Joint supervision of such a program by both the Graduate School of Education and the department of English will not require so serious a modification of the peculiar work which both are created to do as to require expensive reorganization of courses or of personnel; yet it ought to permit fruitful cooperation, both with respect to candidates and the local program, and with respect to the larger problem of English in the national educational system.

### CONCLUSION

The committee realizes that the terms of its commission have compelled it to deal with problems and to make recommendations which academic faculties will, even at this critical period, be naturally somewhat reluctant to face. But secondary education is a great democratic task worthy of engaging all the energies that academic faculties and faculties of education together can bring to it. The challenge is with us and cannot be avoided. If the universities, both state supported and

privately endowed, do not undertake to do the best they possibly can for the training of secondary school teachers, the entire task, both at the undergraduate and the graduate level, will become the exclusive prerogative of state teachers colleges. It is our conviction that many of these institutions are laboring conscientiously at this immense undertaking, and that they often understand its problems, especially in relation to the needs of American society, better than most academic faculties have yet given evidence of understanding them. It would be highly unfortunate, however, if the whole task were left to institutions of this character, since in the nature of things they can hardly be fully equipped to deal with it or to bring to bear on it the complete resources of knowledge and judgment at the disposal of the country. The universities must bring to bear on teacher-training all the wisdom and resolution which they possess, and they cannot begin too soon.

## APPENDIX A

It will be noted that the recommended program contains no element of special training in "guidance"; and none in such instruments of education as the radio and the moving pictures. The committee has already discussed "guidance" and has dismissed it as a possible element in this program, not because we do not see the need of guidance but because we believe that amateur or ill-advised guidance is likely to do more harm than good (see above, pp. 16-17; 28). We are similarly of the opinion that the radio and the movies, though useful as tools, should not be mistaken for ends. But to make our position clear, we set down the following conclusions about the radio. Our conclusions about the place of the moving-picture in English teaching would be so very similar that there seems no need for a parallel set of statements:

1. Valuable instruction in "appreciation" of the radio as a specialized form of art is not yet generally possible.
2. Instruction in how to perform for the radio, produce radio programs, or understand the radio as a technical mechanism has no place in the course in English.
3. There is no place in English work for listening to the radio when what it offers possesses no literary significance or makes no contribution to instruction in the comprehension and interpretation of speech.
4. The study of records of radio programs is likely to be more useful for any instructional purpose than is listening to broadcasts in the original form.
5. The radio shares, however, with other forms of expression, if methodically and temperately used, a place in instruction for the comprehension and interpretation of speech.
6. The radio may occasionally be useful as a source of experience with literature of established value.
7. Universities should promote research in defining the specialized techniques involved in dealing with the radio as itself a specialized technique and medium of expression, and they should then, in the light of such research, train people to teach the aesthetics and appreciation of radio as a distinct subject.
8. When such a course is maturely established it may, under proper safeguards, be made a part of the teacher-training program in English.

## APPENDIX B

The committee was fortunate in securing testimony from experienced teachers of English in the high schools, many of whom spent an entire evening with the committee, talking very frankly about the whole educational situation. The "testimony" of nine of these teachers as summarized by the research assistant of the committee is here printed. The names of the teachers are concealed for obvious reasons. The groups were heard on three evenings.

*First group:* Teacher A (a woman) is head of a high school English department in a Massachusetts sea-coast city, the school population of which is racially heterogeneous. Teacher B (a man) is a member of the English staff in a well-known private school in the East. Teacher C (a man) is a member of the English department of a very large New York high school.

### *Problem 1*

What these teachers believe to be the most important present needs of secondary-school pupils, especially in English.

- | A   | B  | C   |
|---|--|---|
| 1. The majority of public high schools are finding it necessary to vary their offering in keeping with the varying abilities, cultural backgrounds, skills, and interests of their pupils—especially those in the general curriculum. | The course in English at A—— has had to be changed slightly over the past ten years in view of the fact that students today show, on the whole, a little less industry than formerly. The intellectual quality of students today seems no lower than formerly. | High-school departments of English are finding it necessary to alter their offering and lower their standards to take account of the fact that the middle third of the high-school population, which dictates content and standards, is inferior in ability, industry, and interests to the middle third of former times. |
| 2. For those who are not going to college it is necessary to adapt English courses to vocational ends.  | Boys from the Middle West and from the Far West seem more alert and more easily interested than do boys from the East.   | One consequence of the fact that the high-school population is the general population of a certain age is that the lowest third, which  |



## A

## B

## C

3. For all students, even the superior ones, it is necessary to teach material in English which the pupils recognize as of practical importance to them.

4. Teachers of English are finding it necessary to offer a great deal of free reading in order to secure voluntary reading. Those pupils who are in the commercial and general curricula often prefer factual reading materials to fiction — as biographies, travel.

5. Teachers of English should try to make their pupils a little more "choosy" about the radio and the movies.

would not formerly have been in high school at all, presents problems of great difficulty and importance — especially in remedial reading and in provision for sub-normal intelligences. Incidentally, it is the third and fourth generations of Americans that are the worst students; almost as numerous among the worst are students of old native stock "sunk in the scale."

Another consequence of the necessity for lowered standards is that less can be done for superior students — which results, of course, in poorer performance on their part.

Boys seem to read no less than formerly, but their assimilation of what they read seems far less thorough.

So far as popularity is concerned, particular books seem to stand or fall on their own merits in terms of substance. Whether the book is fiction or non-fiction seems to make no difference.

Teachers of English should guide their pupils through those out-of-school experiences having aesthetic and emotional value which they would not otherwise find appropriately.

## A

6. The English department should not attempt to provide its pupils with an appreciation of a certain number of books whose high place in the cultural heritage is assured, but should attempt to provide their pupils with an appreciation of whatever available books — in or out of this group — they can comprehend and, under the best teaching, assimilate.

## B

The English department should include among its aims that of providing an appreciation of a certain number of books whose high place in the cultural heritage is assured. Yet, at the same time, so much attention should not be given this aim that other equally worthy ones are neglected. It is, of course, very hard to secure proper proportions, and to agree upon what proportions are proper.

## C

The English department in high schools should not attempt to provide all of their pupils with an appreciation of a certain few books whose high place in the cultural heritage is assured. It should, rather, attempt to find among the certainly large number of such books the few which are appropriate for the individual pupil. *Appropriate* is here defined as "satisfying some personal need, related to his background, and within his understanding." Though omission of the best books is by no means advocated, yet appreciation of them is only to be attained through a series of experiences with less complicated forms of thought — experiences which, while they maintain contact with the pupil's ability to appreciate, at the same time elevate that ability toward its maturity. This recommended approach is not essentially a literary one. This attempt to lead up to an appreciation of the best does not imply any desire to make things easy for the pupil, but only to keep them appropriate.

*Problem 2*

What these teachers believe to have been the value of their preparation for teaching, as judged by the help which that preparation has given them in dealing with the problems of teaching in the secondary school.

A	B	C
1.		Adequate preparation for teaching English includes thorough grounding in general cultural subjects.
2. Though many student-teachers of English now shun courses in composition, they should all take them. The same can be said for a survey course in American literature. Much can be gained from a course in contemporary literature; however acquired, a knowledge of it is essential. Teachers usually find a good course in grammar a great help.	Student-teachers would profit from a single course in contemporary literature if the course stressed not the forms of such literature, but its backgrounds, and the quality of its substance.	A four-year undergraduate education can be made to supply adequate background in the subject matter of English. What is not thus acquired can be got from the teacher's own reading and a course or two later. A knowledge of recent literature, for instance, while very necessary, can be obtained in this way.
3.		Preparation for teaching the appreciation of literature should emphasize the significance of past writers for the world of today. Analysis of the style and skill of past writers is not significant. This is not to say, however, that appreciation of Shakespeare's significance for his own time is not an aspect of his significance for our own.
4. Student-teachers must be trained in speech and in reading aloud.		From somewhere the teacher of English must get instruction in speech.

## A

5. Teachers usually find that general Education courses contain very little material that fits practical requirements of the particular subject being taught, or state requirements. Student-teachers should, however, gain much from a course in the teaching of English, provided a successful teacher of English in high school is the instructor.

## B

Student-teachers should be helped by a course in methods of teaching, provided the course is well taught and taught for the purpose of making things easier for a potentially good teacher.

## C

Courses in Education can have value only after the academic ground has been filled in. Sound courses in Education make for recognition of the problems of method, and they can equip the teacher with at least a few very stimulating and practical ideas.

6.

Teachers of English should be grounded in the history and philosophy of education, and in comparative education, so as to understand the relation between education and the social system it serves.

7. Student-teachers should study psychology, but it should be "straight" psychology, not educational psychology.

Student-teachers should find very valuable a course in adolescent psychology.

Teachers of English should be familiar with adolescent psychology, for the opportunity it affords to observe psychological events accurately, to test its tenets, and to select those among them which fit into one's own *rationale* of teaching.

8.

Student-teachers of English should be prepared to diagnose cases of reading disability, but not to engage in remedial procedures.

9.

Student-teachers should be put through some sort of internship, laboratory teach-

A

B

C

ing—in a normal, not a model school. Apprentice teaching at present is just a sort of extra-curricular activity for student-teachers.

10.

Teachers of English should not be examined by a single battery of formal tests in discrete Educational subjects. Instead, their competence should be judged on the basis of an intimate knowledge of their experience and their successes over a period of perhaps two years of probationary teaching.

11.

The teaching ability, the scholarship, and the technical skill (in the sense of breadth of view on problems of teaching) of the student-teacher's instructor make all the difference between a good Education course and a useless one. The label borne by the course means nothing at all.

12. Teachers of English should be trained to conduct certain extra-curricular activities—notably public speaking, dramatics, and publications.

*Problem 3*

To what extent these teachers believe that the usual organization of the secondary school and the duties imposed on secondary-school teachers give teachers an opportunity to do for their pupils what most needs to be done educationally.

A	B	C
1. Emphatic nods.	A nod.	Teachers of all subjects should require their pupils to meet the standards of English usage set by the English department.
2. The burden of extra-curricular activities upon teachers of English is excessive. Upon them fall all such responsibilities which do not involve the use of the hands. Teachers in other departments must take over many extra-curricular activities now directed by members of the English department.	Since at A---- only those extra-curricular activities exist which have been started by some interested member of the faculty, no problem of over-loading has arisen.	Though extra-curricular responsibilities do not over-burden teachers of English as such, yet an extremely heavy load is placed upon certain individuals. This burden should be more evenly distributed.
3.		In New York the supply of superior teachers seems to be greater today than formerly.
4.		Entering students should be allowed to go on in high school only if they have no reading disability.
5.		There is no point in marking those pupils who are not going on to college.
6.		Those members of the high-school population who are of superior intelligence can have justice done them only if they are provided

A

B

C

with separate schools and curricula different from those open to them at present.

7.

The same is true for those members of the high-school population who possess subnormal intelligences. It is not "catering" to their deficiencies that is the key to serving them best, but provision of separate schools and curricula appropriate to their needs and abilities.

8.

Teachers of English should be afforded more time for informal conference with pupils in order to get to know them—not merely their specific difficulties with English, but their backgrounds, general needs, and interests. This is more a social problem than a problem of instruction in English.

*Second group:* Teacher D (a woman) comes from a village high school near a large New England industrial city. Teacher E (a man) is from a high school in a small town. Teacher F (a man) is on the staff of a large technical high school in an industrial city.

*Problem 1 [as above]*

D

E

F

1. The non-college group of pupils do little voluntary reading of anything but pulps. They find the study of *Macbeth* difficult but worth while. The college-preparatory group

High-school pupils do not get from books all that is there for them. In part this is due to reading disabilities, in part to lack of instruction in how to go about getting what the

The quality of voluntary reading is very low. Reading difficulty is principally one of comprehension. Remedial instruction is the most effective means of increasing

## D

enjoy and appreciate free reading of Shakespeare.

## E

book contains, and in large part to lack of experience with books that contain something. Probably most of the books read as part of the course in English are too difficult for most of the pupils reading them. The difficulty is not simply one of intellectual capacity to comprehend, but also of experience with which to understand.

## F

the ability and the desire to read. The study of grammar is next most effective. Most effective in increasing good reading habits and in increasing the desire to read worth-while stuff would be inclusion of only that reading which must be done in order to find out something which has to be found out.

2. In composition work stress is laid upon teaching pupils to speak and write in a straightforward and lucid manner.

High-school pupils today need a great deal of help in learning to say what they want to say.

The greatest need in composition seems to be that of improved diction; second is increased vocabulary; third is acquisition of an attitude of wanting to speak and write well. In the field of written composition all that can be aimed at with expectation of success is the ability to write so that what is written can be understood.

*Problem 2 [as above]*

## D

1. A broad cultural background is an essential prerequisite to the successful teaching of English. Of especial value is thorough acquaintance with history.

## E

Knowledge of Modern European history is a necessary part of the background of the teacher of English.

## F

2. Courses in Education are very valuable after teaching has begun; they give help in finding solutions to one's

In courses in Education there is need for more specific information about how to do what teachers are



## D

problems of teaching. Some courses, however, are set up in ideal terms out of touch with situations in actual teaching.

3. Educational psychology is valuable, and a course in adolescent psychology should be part of every teacher's preparation.

## E

## F

called upon daily to do; at the same time, there is in many education courses too much teaching of specific method not applicable to the teacher's own situations (*sic*). Courses in measurement and statistics are useful.

There should be a course in adolescent psychology set up so as to apply clearly to problems in the senior high school on the one hand, and in the junior high school on the other.

*Problem 3 [as above]*

## D

1. The weight of the extra-curricular load seems of minor importance in the face of the splendid opportunities which extra-curricular contacts offer the teacher who wants to know pupils as people. The English department gets most of extra-curricular opportunities because most extra-curricular activities can be best conducted by teachers of English.

## E

The extra-curricular load is heavy but worth carrying, for conduct of extra-curricular activities makes it possible to do more for the pupils — in and out of classroom.

## F

- 2.

Teachers can help each other. Teachers of experience in the school can make it a great deal easier for new teachers to "learn on the job."

## 150 THE TRAINING OF ENGLISH TEACHERS

*Third Group:* Teacher G (a man) formerly taught English in a high school in Georgia. Teacher H (a man) teaches in a trade school. Teacher I (a man) taught in a small rural high school in Indiana.

### *Problem 1 [as above]*

- | G  | H   | I  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>1. Because of lack of funds, facilities, and adequately trained teachers, the work of many high schools in the South does not meet high standards. Because of the weight of tradition their work shows little reexamination of educational values.</p>  | <p>In teaching pupils in vocational schools, the job of the teacher of English is to get pupils to read more than they ordinarily would and to express themselves as accurately as they need.</p> | <p>High-school pupils who come off the farm and return there upon graduation take little interest in what is learned, only in "education." This is equally true of their parents. Almost no pupils go on to college.</p>   |
| <p>2. The first job of the school is generally considered to be economic, particularly familiarity with natural resources in the South. His personal guess is that economic conditions, especially since the depression, have been largely responsible for the present emphasis upon vocational interests rather than upon the humanities.</p> |   | <p>Especially since the depression pupils have called for as much industrial education and home economics as they can get.</p>   |
| <p>3. Library facilities are weak in the South.</p>  |   | <p>Library facilities are weak in rural areas.</p>   |
| <p>4. The pupils in Southern schools are, in the greatest numbers, probably less capable of appreciating literature than are comparable groups of pupils in the North.</p>   | <p>There is little reading of vocational books, some biography, much contemporary fiction.</p>  | <p>Probably 90% of the pupils in rural high schools have never read a novel voluntarily in their lives. All they care for is the plot. There are, apparently, no "classics" — as schools interpret the word — which the majority of rural pupils can appreciate.</p> |

## G

5. A wider range of books should be studied, this in terms of social and personal needs and abilities of pupils. More books should be read in which the pupil can see himself in his own time and his own circumstances. Whether a book is contemporary or a "classic" makes less difference than does its contribution to local needs and its meaning for the pupils who study it.

## H

Vocational school pupils can be got to read with enjoyment if that goal is sought directly. They can be got to read if the teacher will "sell" particular books constantly, concretely, and enthusiastically — and in variety. Even when school is over many young people so taught continue to read, and better stuff than they would otherwise have read.

## I

Pupils evidence very little interest in books customarily studied, but they enjoy reading ones which they can feel, ones set in a mode of life they know.

6. There are definite values in the reading of magazines and newspapers, especially as they reveal and interpret life in the South. However, controversial sectional problems are to be dealt with through literature very warily if at all.

*The Reader's Digest* has proved popular and useful in stimulating more thoughtful reading. Other magazines of youthful appeal — like *Popular Mechanics* — are also useful in weaning pupils away from infantile reading.

7. Prevalent work in composition is too academic; some pupils would benefit by more creative writing — that is, more writing voluntarily done, writing whose chief value is therapeutic.

Composition in rural high schools is pitiful. It is difficult to know where to start to improve even simple sentence structure.

8. Until the grammar which is truly functional has been isolated for use, the study of grammar is not likely to help youngsters to read or write better.

Ideally, only usage should be taught — and only enough of that to aid in the writing of a decent letter.

	G	H	I
9.			Pupils in rural high schools are quite unconcerned to improve their speech. The fact that they already speak the language of their parents and the community precludes any desire to speak better than that.

*Problem 2 [as above]*

	G	H	I
1.	Courses in composition are likely to be of great help to teachers of English.		
2.			Courses in Education, provided they follow some experience with teaching, are stimulating to thought, create a recognition of technical problems of teaching.
3.	Practice-teaching in a demonstration school is very instructive.		Of more value than courses in Education is practice-teaching.
4.			He found no psychology course, educational or "straight" as effective as experience in producing a grasp of the psychology of teaching.

*Problem 3 [as above]*

	G	H	I
1.	It is hard to strike a happy middle ground in the matter of extra-curricular load. There is no doubt that conduct of extra-curricu-		The teacher of English bears a heavier extra-curricular load than do teachers of other subjects.

G

lar activities provides the best opportunity which the school affords for learning to know pupils as persons.

H

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In addition to valuable glimpses into the actual class rooms and invaluable observations on teacher-training from persons in the field, the committee has also received a number of very frank letters, some of which are here reprinted in whole or in part.

The first is from teacher B of group one, a member of the English staff, as has been noted, of a leading private school in the East:

"Following your suggestion, I am glad to set down on paper a few reflections upon the discussion in which I participated last evening.

"First, for effective statement of my two main objectives as a teacher of English may I refer you to Professor Jones's article 'The Place of the Humanities in American Education,' and 'The Tentative Report of the Language Committee of the School and College Conference in English, February, 1940.' Though lacking the necessary experience to confirm my judgment, I am inclined to believe that the values emphasized in these two articles should be, as well as my own objectives, those of secondary school English teachers throughout the country, whether in public or private schools. I can think of nothing more essential to the rich and effective individual or social life of Americans everywhere than command of precise means of verbal communication, the ordered thinking which it promotes, and imaginative possession of man's cultural heritage in the humanities. Therefore, rather than attempt to adapt our teaching to the vocational needs of young people as clerks, mechanics, or clam diggers, I should like to see English teachers everywhere concentrate on finding the best means of increasing the stature of their students as human beings, who lead individual and social as well as economic lives. Realizing that a man's vocational needs cannot be divorced from his 'human' needs, I still think that, for the purposes of education, a distinction between them is worth preserving.

"The important unresolved questions last night which interest me most are:

"1. What is the cause of the present-day student's lack of knowledge of our cultural heritage?

"2. What should we do about this loss?

"If I understood him correctly, Professor Jones feels that young people go into college or into life ignorant of tradition and without common cultural background in part, at least, because teachers of English shirk their responsibility of teaching the classics, — that they fail to teach these books because they prefer to take the more easy and more simple path of teaching contemporary literature or how to make a sales talk. My limited observation leads me to believe that their failure in this respect is not the result of lack of mental or moral courage. Possessed of more respect for the humanistic tradition than almost any other large group of people, they keenly desire to pass this tradition on to their students. Yet, in facing the problem of how to do this successfully, they see, or think that they see, two great prerequisites for the task: (1) the desire or even willingness of students to read the necessary books and (2) the language skill to enable them to do it. They believe that without minimum willingness or interest in the task students get little from what they read; worse, they develop life-long distaste for good books. Likewise, teachers believe that students' inability to make sense out of these books, or relate them in any meaningful way to their own experience, produces a feeling of frustration and contempt for the task. Therefore, these teachers argue, since these young people have the rest of their lives in which to read, our task is first to awaken in them a desire to read and then teach them how to do it, and, further, since a first principle of pedagogy is to work from the simple to the complex and from the known to the unknown, we should begin with contemporary literature and stay there as long as is necessary. This often means a long time, with the result that few classics are taught. The teacher's task is complicated by a variety of contemporary phenomena, — radio, automobile, motion picture, the general tempo, confusion, and insecurity of modern life of which the committee is more aware than I. He is often deflected from his main purposes by being faced with what seems to him to be immediate and compelling moral and social needs of his students, which must be met before any learning at all can take place. Why he should be more sensitive to these needs than teachers of other subjects I don't know. But he often is. Perhaps his training in the *humanities*. Thus, teachers do shrink from the difficulty of teach-

ing the great books. But, in my opinion, they do so, not through weakness, but for pedagogical reasons which merit sympathetic consideration.

"What shall we do about it? First, it may be that skill in language mentioned above need not first be developed through simple materials, then applied to great books, but that young people can learn to read the great books simply by reading them, — that my two main objectives, and those of most English teachers, can be achieved simultaneously. It may also be that the classics can whet the appetite for further good reading as well as any contemporary material. I have noticed how frequently especially gifted teachers hold this belief, how impatient they are of so-called concessions to students to arouse their interest. In the hands of exceptionally skilful teachers, I feel, classics can be exciting to ordinary boys and girls without special preparation for them, and skill in language can be developed through them. But I am sceptical of the possibility of any great number of English teachers accomplishing these ends without carefully paving the way.

"At the moment I am placing my faith in a reorientation of English teaching towards the kind of language discipline sketched in the School and College Conference Report. If this emphasis were to become an important one through the grammar and high school, replacing much work in criticism and 'appreciation' of literature for which these students, in my opinion, are often not ready, we might have a group of students in the last two years of the high school capable of reading great books with what seems to me to be the minimum understanding and pleasure necessary to justify them. In the process we should introduce the classics as rapidly as possible. In the meantime, through theater, music, and art, as well as history, we should try to bring our cultural heritage to young people in vital form, thus preparing them imaginatively for the solid reading which will terminate their high school work in English.

"I may be quite wrong in my present feeling that the secondary school teacher of English must make a choice in emphasis between training in language as understood here and reading of the classics. But that is my present feeling, and, if I appear to sacrifice awareness of tradition to ordered thinking resulting from improved means of verbal communication, it is not that I value one more than the other, but that I hope by means of this emphasis to achieve higher quality in both.

"In response to my question to Professor Jones regarding his choice of emphasis if one must be made, I understood him to say

that he was primarily desirous that his students possess *some* common denominator on which he could count. This leads me to wonder, in view of the scope of your investigation, how reliable nation-wide evidence is to be had concerning this present lack of common denominator among your people. We all have our subjective impressions. It seems clear to me, for instance, that, whereas a generation ago, college Freshmen possessed in common a knowledge of a certain limited list of classics, now they lack this common background. But have these college Freshmen read *fewer* good books than those of a generation ago, or have they simply read *different* good books? Likewise, is the power of college Freshmen to think straight in words markedly less than it was a generation ago? How can we find out? I know that I must be constantly on my guard against what I find to be an almost universal complaint of teachers about the preparation of students who come to them. A year ago I heard one of my colleagues in a rather typical lament about the woeful training which his entering students had been given. He worked conscientiously with them and made them acceptable for admission to good colleges. The other day I heard an instructor in English from Yale say concerning one of the boys who came to him from my colleague, 'When I got him he couldn't even write his name correctly. Now I've got him up to 75.' Hopeless when they come to us, we struggle with them until, — they are hopeless to the next teacher who gets them. If there is no common mark or stamp of training on these students, — no common denominator at all in ability to order their thinking and express themselves intelligibly, we ought to face the facts and justify as we may the vast amount of honest work which has been expended in getting them nowhere. But it seems to me that some method of acquiring reliable evidence on this point is urgently required."

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The next is a "statement" from a teacher in a large public high school in Alabama, a woman:

The time spent on so-called education courses could be spent to far greater advantage on actual courses in literature and composition. Some teachers are sadly lacking in these. What we need is more emphasis on scholarship and less on theory and routine. I believe that natural aptitude, personality, and intensive knowledge of one's subject make the great teacher and that all the educational theories in the world will not supplant these qualities. I think a few courses in psychology are quite helpful, and of course some languages, philosophy, and sociology. But the



person who is interested in literature will naturally pursue these and many other subjects.

I believe that one of the greatest faults with schools to-day is that principals and supervisors who haven't done any actual teaching in years impose their theories upon their schools without understanding just how all this influences the fundamental function of the school: namely, learning; and that while occasionally some innovation may be extremely necessary, most of the ideas are pure "bunk." Teachers are so busy these days following a lot of routine that they don't have time for the things they should be, and want to be, teaching.

You asked what we thought of the classics for the average students who are now in the schools. I am in favor of certain required and somewhat simple courses in World Literature and American Literature for the first two or three years, and of having the last year or perhaps even the last two years elective — not dispensing with English, but having a wider variety of electives for different types of students, as college prep. English, commercial English, and vocational English, besides the various creative and journalistic and dramatic courses usually offered at present. (I do not think that all students should receive identical diplomas. High school diplomas should, it seems to me, have various connotations as do college degrees.) All English courses, however, should involve some classics and have the general goal of widening experience and of uplifting life, taste, and appreciation.

I think all this boils down to the fact that I don't think the courses in Education imposed upon me helped in any way. If I have had some success in teaching English, it has been because of a love for literature and language, and natural aptitude.

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The following statement is from Teacher A (in group one):

*A. What do you consider to be the most important present needs of secondary-school pupils, especially in English?*

The present need is more intelligent parents, school boards, higher standards for teachers, limitation of extra-curricular activities, more guidance, more discipline (cf. Mary Ellen Chase — *A Goodly Fellowship*), remedial reading, emphasis upon phonics, accuracy, and drill. The last has been relegated to the dust pile by "Educators." From experience I firmly believe in homogeneous grouping, which allows for a diversified program with definite standards for each group. We are training an indolent, inaccurate, superficial youth. For this I blame (if blame I must) theo-

rists, who have ruined superintendents who have ruined principals who force teachers to ruin pupils. That American octopus, the School of Education, is fast strangling in its tentacles the culture, the disciplines, the standards of the better educational programs. Superficial, flashy "projects" are replacing bona fide education. Do not misunderstand me: I support and utilize worth-while projects; but dressing dolls, building guillotines, and celebrating fish fries are not English and deserve no part of *class time*. At present, we are in grave danger of sacrificing the breadth of culture that English affords to the tool that makes for headline publicity. (Schools need publicity of the *right* sort.)

The better scholars to-day are distinctly better, but because of our pussy-footing methods we lower standards and make our potential geniuses lazy and superficial. Colleges help us finesse our cards by eliminating language requirements and awarding A.B.'s for a few credits in social and natural sciences topped by courses in the psychology of Dale Carnegie and Marjorie Hillis. There will always, and there should, be colleges for the high school graduate of average ability, but these should not grant A.B. degrees. (Bachelor of what *Arts*?)

In providing for varying aptitudes, abilities, and interests much can be accomplished (with homogeneous grouping) if the English course is planned from the standpoint of college, civic, and leisure time demands. My syllabus in ——— provides for the following groups:

1. College
2. Commercial
3. General
4. Vocational (to be adopted)

In all of these groups we consider different abilities, aptitudes, and interests, less in the college of course, than in the others; e.g., the X.H.S. 19- college group will omit Carlyle's *Essay on Burns*. (I revere Carlyle too much to subject him to the necessary vivisection.) X.H.S. 19- college group will study not only Carlyle but Browning.

The commercial group for the first two years follows the plan of the college. In English III commercial, emphasis is place upon accuracy in mechanics with ability to compose short themes of factual content. Literature is classic as well as modern. In fact, we include as much classic [literature] as the group can assimilate. In commercial English (in appreciation of the McGuffey era of a previous generation), we foster a glow of personal satisfaction

from memorization of famous classical quotations. In commercial English IV we emphasize letter writing, interviews, telephone conversation, dress, social amenities, oral English, with actual practice in trial interviews with city business men followed by reports from the business men. Literature is *mostly* modern. *Macbeth* is read upon student demand (annually), although not required in the course of study.

In the general course each teacher becomes more or less a law unto herself with few questions asked if results are forthcoming. Our general course defies codification. It alters as it alteration finds. Reading is for the most part free and extensive. There is more oral than written English with study of social amenities, an appreciation of better radio programs, motion pictures, and magazines. We attempt some simple propaganda analysis from newspaper editorials, news items, cartoons, advertisements, radio, and motion pictures. Written composition consists mostly of letter writing, précis, and summaries. There is no attempt at style, but rather a demand for accuracy in factual content. Literature read is mostly current from all fields: biography, science, travel, fiction, vocations. Vocational interviews prove helpful in directing the trend of class assignments.

The chief weakness of school programs is the demand by school authorities that traffic keep moving. In order not to jam the system, teachers who fail pupils have been condemned as poor teachers. This point is debatable. English programs should be revised to offer a variety of courses each with definite standards. (This, I feel, is not possible without homogeneous grouping according to course selection.) Children should learn as early as possible that certain standards must be achieved — or else.

In addition to the above, we try to inculcate an interest in city politics, in personality and character tests, in general standards of living.

For my vocational groups, I plan a specific course for the printers, with a more or less general course for the other trades. I recognize the fact that a printer must acquire certain fundamentals to secure his job. I know that man cannot live by bread alone. I hope to give him as much more as I find he can digest. How much that is, time will tell.

*B. What do you believe to have been the value of your own preparation for teaching?*

I deplore the lowering of college standards to the exclusion of classical background. I see little hope for the English pupils of

day-after-to-morrow if the teachers of to-morrow are to be denied this preparation. In addition to this classical tradition and modern language background I recommend survey courses in English, American, and World literatures. Besides the customary English majors (novel, poetry, Chaucer and Anglo-Saxon in preference to Spenser and Milton, if one must choose) I insist upon training in voice, public speaking, and dramatics. Psychology, logic, ethics, philosophy all are of value. My training lacked sufficient appreciation of the allied arts, music, painting, sculpture. When the aspiring English teacher can secure all this, I do not know.

Everything is fish that comes to the net of an English teacher. His knowledge of bridge, tennis, golf, hockey, birds, wood lore, any and all of these may prove the open sesame to his class even more than his quotations from Huxley or Pater.

I believe that there is a place for the School of Education in the training of teachers. In my day teaching, like matrimony, was learned by the trial and error method. In teaching, however, some progress has been made in the research in methodology. Yet Mary Ellen Chase says in *A Goodly Fellowship* (pp. 94-95): "Too many 'educators' to-day insist that the failure of what they term the old education lay in its wrong approach to children, its wrong methods, its inflexible systems. What they apparently fail to see is that the failure of any education, old or new, lies openly, and, one would think, obviously, not in approach or in method but in the personality and character of those who teach. No method or lack of it can ever dim human vision and understanding; nor can all the methods or approaches of all the teachers' colleges in the universe in the slightest measure supply what was left out of certain teachers upon the day they were born." Again (p. 59), "Such a requirement (Education), as I see it, may tend to raise the level of mediocrity in public school teaching, but that it does much of anything for the girl who is cut out to be a good teacher, except to irritate her, I have yet to discover."

For methodology for the senior student I recommend a good methods course taught by an active secondary school teacher. This course would include also practice teaching, a bibliography of materials (especially free ones), a familiarity with high school courses of study and texts, a few precepts on the *ethics of the profession*, a knowledge of professional organizations, and a discussion of problems to be met. The rest can well wait for graduate study *not* to be recommended until the student has had 2-3 years of teaching experience. By that time he has a clearer understanding of his needs and can approach graduate study from a graduate

viewpoint. Graduate study that follows on the heels of undergraduate study sometimes unfits the candidate for secondary school teaching in that human understanding becomes of lesser import than subject matter.

A menace to the teaching profession is the teacher-coach — usually an individual of more brawn than brain with an A.B. acquired in a collegiate mill and small interest in any scholarly attainments.

*C. To what extent do you believe that the usual organization of the secondary school and the duties imposed on secondary-school teachers give teachers an opportunity to do for their pupils what most needs to be done educationally?*

The bane of English teaching is the overloaded program and the back-breaking and time-consuming extra-curricular activities. Superintendents and principals insist that English programs be planned on a par with typing, stenography, arithmetic, and algebra. In typing, once principles are taught, the pupil is left more or less to his own devices. Papers are checked for mechanical errors, sometimes by the pupil himself, sometimes by older pupils, sometimes by the teacher *in class time*. Stenography papers, too, present a like mechanical problem. Arithmetic and algebra are explained via the blackboard, and daily work is checked for the waste basket. Granting that English teachers talk too much, there is only one way to inculcate a love of poetry; that is, by reading aloud. Few pupils can be entrusted with this. At times the English teacher talks steadily (more or less) for five periods daily, supervises a study hall a sixth, and at the close of school, when the typing and mathematics teachers are elbowing pupils in their stampede for the exits, the English teacher assembles the cast of a play and coaches for an additional two hours to return home with an armful of essays that cannot be corrected for unity, coherence, and emphasis (pardon the obsolete terms) to the rhythm of "Oh, Johnny" on the "Hit Parade" program. This uneven division of labor endangers the esprit de corps. Salaries, too, are the same, although commercial training may cost only \$50 a year and may be acquired at a Normal School masquerading as a Teachers' College, while English faculties hold A.B. and A.M. degrees from colleges and universities of  $\Phi$ BK standing.

English Department extra-curricular activities in X—— include

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|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Weekly newspaper  | 3. School Annual     |
| 2. Literary magazine | 4. Freshman Handbook |

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|--|--|
| 5. Prize speaking                          | 11. National Forensic League   |
| 6. Dramatics                               | 12. All programs and banquets at which pupils speak, besides essay contests sponsored by any and all societies with propaganda to propagate. |
| 7. Spelling contests                       |  |
| 8. Graduation parts (writing and speaking) |  |
| 9. Honor Society                           |  |
| 10. Literary Society                       |  |

The system results in defeating the aims of good teaching and leaves small time for reading and the cultural arts that so delight the true teacher of English. As for creative work, the majority of English teachers are forced to choose between giving to pupil or to self. We need more President Neilsons to afford us free time to recreate our souls—more time for reading, for writing, for living.

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The following "statement" comes from a man teaching English in a large industrial city:

Homogeneous grouping in our high school is attempted only in English classes and is based primarily on results obtained in achievement tests and on the basis of the I.Q. of the individual pupil. However, pupils with hopes of college entrance are always placed in the A division. The B division is made up of several elements; pupils of lower grade of ability, those who are imperfectly adjusted to school, and the large group that is in school solely because economic conditions in the town make it impossible for them to get jobs. The last group would normally leave school in the freshman or sophomore year.

B divisions of English in the junior year are groups extremely difficult to interest in the work in American Literature, prescribed for that year. It is the group also from which most of the disciplinary cases arise. Women teachers have invariably had trouble with boys in these classes. It has been my belief, after dealing with the cases that developed there, that the boys disliked the subject matter of the course, especially as it was discussed and interpreted by a woman.

At the suggestion of my superintendent, I took over the class in Junior English B in 1939-40. There were thirty-four pupils in it, ten of whom were girls. In all except three instances, the pupils came from below average home backgrounds—the parents being laborers or on relief. The cultural standard is low in all instances. For example, I found among the families represented

that none used the public library regularly, only three subscribed to the better periodicals, and but twelve had newspapers regularly. The newspapers taken were either the \_\_\_\_\_ or the \_\_\_\_\_, which is devoted to local and county news.

At the first meeting of the class in September, I outlined the work for the year which would comprise the reading of a murder story (*Macbeth*); a good Western (*The Virginian*); some modern poetry about people, ships, and war (*Modern Poetry* compiled by Anita Forbes); and a collection of stories of knights, tournaments and jousts (Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*). I asked for a show of hands as to their preference for the first book and their choice was *The Idylls of the King*. At the end of the class period, four people remained to tell me that they were unable to read books with understanding, but stated they liked to hear them read aloud. As a result of this situation I used the first week for the practice of précis writing, taking paragraphs for this purpose from news stories, historical anecdotes and short poems. The four people did well at this but met the same old difficulties in actual reading. *Idylls of the King* caught the interest of the class from the first. The assignments were short, covering two or three episodes a day, and contained instructions to think of the characters as real people. Asked as to their conception of the physical appearance of the characters, they named their favorite movie heroes. Thus, Lancelot was either Errol Flynn or Gary Cooper. The class as a whole showed keen insight as to analysis of character. Lancelot was condemned because of his relations with Guenivere, but only because of the friendship between him and Arthur. A love affair with any other married woman would have been understandable and to be expected. However, the class was fully agreed that Lancelot was at fault as to Elaine and they read into the episode a relationship which Tennyson did not intend. A boy and a girl told me, after class, that there must have been something deeper than appeared on the surface, else Elaine's emotion would not have been so deep.

One 18-year old boy, who had failed both English I and II and who was on trial in English III B, was questioned as to the reason for Lynette's flouting of Gareth's chivalrous championship of her cause, and replied, "Well, she's all burned up about it," and, upon being asked if Gareth's status as a kitchen knave was the cause, said "Naw, she's really nuts about the guy and won't admit it."

*The Virginian* for the most part left them cold. Except for an appreciation of the humorous incidents, the hanging party, and a

certain delight in "When you say that, smile" — they found the story exceedingly dull. Their reactions are conditioned, to a large extent, by a constant diet of movies. Hence, the pace of the love affair was boring and their disappointment in the Virginian himself was great. Had he been a real cowboy like Gene Autry or Gary Cooper, he would have swept the heroine off her feet at their first meeting. The differences in social backgrounds of the major characters, the class swept aside as nothing. This is surprising to me, for this group of pupils are well aware of class distinctions in our school population and resent them acutely. All the charm of Wister was lost on them. Pupils generally dislike a story written in the first person, particularly when the narrator is admittedly effete.

*Macbeth* was a joy to us all. For the first time there were volunteers for reading aloud — and, at their request, we acted the banquet scene and the murder. Throughout the play the majority of the class felt strong sympathy for Macbeth and, in the end, for Lady Macbeth. They understood the moral conflict within Macbeth and his wife and felt that it was inevitable that other murders should follow upon the first. I found both boys and girls willing to memorize passages of the play and, together, we selected those which seemed most worth while learning. In a series of compositions which expressed their reactions as to characterization, plot and standard of value, I received such comments, as: "Shakespeare certainly knew about peoples' feelings," "*Macbeth* is the best play by Shakespeare we have read," "If he had left out the witches, it would seem more true to life." The boys were generally more enthusiastic than the girls, and they, likewise, were more interested in discussing the ethical values of the play.

From time to time during the year we had a couple of days' study of American Literature and learned authors, dates, and some of the literary accomplishments of the 18th and 19th century writers. There was a certain group that did a very good job here, and they were the more unimaginative people who could memorize well and liked this type of definite assignment. I read aloud to them, on each of these days, short stories that illustrated the period represented — Washington Irving, Poe, Bret Harte, Hawthorne, etc. They characterized Poe as crazy, Harte and Irving as regular, and one boy said of Bryant, after hearing "Thanatopsis": "What he needed was about an hour's scrimmage every day to forget all that stuff about dying."

In Anita Forbes's *Modern Poetry*, there were poems to satisfy



every member of the class. The rhythmic beat of "The Barrel-Organ" was the first poem we read, and they loved it. Each day we read together two or three poems and then discussed each as to meaning. I added two or three each day, some old and some of the most recent types and we made comparisons as to our reactions. In a week or so they were bringing in bits of verse cut from magazines, or books they had taken from the library and asking permission to read them aloud. During one week-end everyone wrote a poem. Many were excellent as to the thought expressed and one or two were well executed. They agreed that my own effort was pretty bad. Most of the poems were modelled on those in the anthology. There is a slight feeling of Sandburg in the following bit:

The teacher comes on big, flat feet  
She looks over the class with a dull, listless eye  
And I settle into my seat, with a sigh  
To be bored for exactly forty-five minutes.

One poem (by the boy on probation) was published in our school paper — and he took a somewhat sheepish pride in it, but it was, nevertheless, pride. It is perhaps difficult to believe, but these boys, restless, tough, perpetual trouble-makers, were invariably attentive and listened with pleasure to my reading of the more rhythmic poems. (A friend of mine, a teacher of a special class in ——— School, always read Longfellow's "A boy's will is the wind's will" to carry her class through the last period of a difficult day and, while they understood nothing of the poem, it never failed to quiet them.)

Whenever my class in English III showed signs of boredom, I immediately turned from poetry to short stories or perhaps to a day or two of précis writing. We used occasional periods for compiling notebooks of favorite poems or passages from short stories, which were illustrated with pictures cut from magazines. Every one kept his notebook at the end of the year instead of throwing it away as is the custom usually in other courses.

Book reports were due every month, and except for one occasion, they were always ready on time. Very often the books chosen were by authors whose work we had already heard or discussed. I did not insist on the books being chosen from the Reading List altogether, but allowed much latitude in the choice, providing the book was submitted to me first, for my approval.

Whether or not the results of the year justify such an unconventional treatment of English III B is a question that cannot be

answered yet. However, the results of the final examination, of a type similar to that given in preceding years, were as good, on the whole, as the results those years. Home-room teachers of the pupils reported great interest in English III B. These reports were based on discussions and comments overheard by the teachers in the home-rooms, before school or at recess. In allowing pupils to interpret the poetry, plays, and short stories for themselves, they were encouraged to discuss these interpretations in comparison with those most generally accepted. This stimulated them and the class periods were lively. I feel that English ceased to be dull for them and books took on a new meaning. Some of them found for the first time, that poems are not "sissy" and that reading a good book is a very pleasant way of passing an evening. For boys and girls of this type that is an exceedingly important lesson learned. My probationary pupil passed off his conditions by passing the course with a "C." He expressed his reaction briefly: "English isn't so bad and, boy! those periods certainly went by quick." He has made the second honor roll twice in the past year.

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The following "statement" was written for the course in the teaching of English by an experienced woman teacher in a Massachusetts school:

Writing a paper like this forces home the realization that there is no such thing as a plan in this fortuitous old world of ours; but, perhaps, I am generalizing as did the six blind men of Indostan who, with limited experience, attempted to describe an elephant!

I did not plan to be a teacher of English. Heredity and environment played a game of Chinese checkers with my life and today finds me listed on the payroll of the city of ——— as a teacher of English. I look at my colleagues and wonder what inscrutable or haphazard move brought them into the classroom. Some of them are good teachers; some of them are poor. My appraisal, however, is subjective: they are good because I like them; they are poor because I do not like them. My measuring stick, I must further admit, is quixotic. I do not like my forty-four-year-old lantern-jawed neighbor. Two years of her training were spent in reform school work; in every boy there lurks a potential candidate for a penal institution. I do not like the sloppily sentimental woman down the corridor who pleads leniency for every miscreant on the score that he is so good to his mother! I like the teacher downstairs; she is New England. No lush attractiveness is

hers to catch the casual fancy; grey, unbending, economical, hers is the personality that survives. The students come back to see her.

What routes brought them to the English teaching field? What telltale marks singled them out as teachers of English? Are they good teachers of English? The first one reads poetry to the rascals with sound effects that would make Boris Karloff sound like a bedtime story. She thinks they need emotional uplifting. The second one gushes over book reports that are too, too wonderful. She never recognizes them as blurbs lifted wordily from book jackets. The third teacher encourages a Polish boy to write of the beauty of the new swimming pool at the Y.M.C.A. His mother runs a boarding house. The boy's bed is used in the daytime by one of the workers on the night shift at the electric plant.

Let me remind you here that I admitted I was prejudiced. If I tell you that the elephant is soft and flat like a pancake, please remember that I grasped his ear; I "saw" as it was given to me to see. The elocutionist started as a first-grade teacher and worked her way step by step to the tenth grade. She had two years of normal school training, raved bitterly that she was forced to submit to courses in a school of education in order to be promoted, and boasts that she spent a year in the university that sponsored a survey that hit the educational system in ——— amidship. The perennial adolescent was convent-trained. She is addicted to tea-tables and to bridge-tables. She begs you not to take a course here or there. Can't you see you're spoiling the job for the rest of us? Why do any more than you have to do? (I almost said "paid to do.") The spinstery old-timer went to the public schools, studied Latin and Greek, qualified for an A.B. degree, and lost respect for Phi Beta Kappa when she was invited to join. She was granted leave of absence to work as credit manager for a ——— store; two years later she returned to her first love: school-teaching, the teaching of English.

Were you to ask each of these what she found useful in her training, what she lacked, you would still be unable to arrive at a basic pattern for future teachers of English. Conscious of this, I am going to stop peeking at the other rabbits in this warren and make my own confessional for what it is worth!

My father was born in Italy. He was an only son, a descendant of the stubborn, proud Pentimani of the province of Abruzzi. He speaks Tuscan Italian. He learned to speak English by reading newspapers and books. He always spoke to us in Italian.

As children, we could not punctuate our stories with *gee* or *swell*. We used good English words or we stopped talking. A steady glance from my father, and slang went skulking from the circle that gathered around the kitchen table after supper. No English teacher ever worked over *more better*. I stumbled over *piu meglio* at home!

My mother was born in Italy. She is the most remarkable woman I know: she hears English and speaks Italian. Even our attempts at pig-Latin failed to mystify her. We had to speak to her in Italian.

We were necessarily bilingual.

There were nine of us.

Whichever way you counted, I was the fifth child. I had a double advantage: I was not only taught by my older brothers and sisters, but I had to take my turn at teaching my younger brother and sisters. On winter nights we played word games. We had our own gang. We invented our own language, an odd conglomeration of Italian and English. We needed it when we had to speak privately publicly. Those words were real to us. Can you imagine a third-grade teacher pondering the word *feess* on my little sister's composition? She meant *steadily*. Today anybody in the family will recognize *cuppin* as dipper, *linzil* as sheet. It was fun to create words.

We had to play in our own back yard!

We were forbidden to go to the library; father was afraid we might be run over by horses. He bought the Encyclopaedia Britannica, magazines, and newspapers. We studied at home. Of course I read library books. I used to dash through the back streets, grab the next two books from the library shelves, have them charged on my card, dash madly home, hoping my father had not discovered my absence. Such a routine hardly gave me a well-selected reading diet, but it was a plentiful one.

We were not allowed to go to the moving pictures.

We wrote and coached our own plays on the slightest provocation. I remember a tear-jerker we put on one day just because we had found a can of talcum powder. Our heroine abandoned her child. The years passed. We noted them by adding talcum to the head of our heroine. The child grew up. He grew to be president. His broken-down old mother recognized him as her son, but she did not tell him who she was. She could not disgrace him. Oh, it was sad!

We were not scheduled to go to college.

I took the commercial course in high school. I studied double-entry bookkeeping and worked in the school bank. I studied shorthand and typewriting. I learned how to use office appliances. I studied United States and English History. I studied Spanish. I refused to take Cooking and Sewing. I studied printing instead. I learned how to set type and correct proof. It was in this course that I learned how to spell and how to punctuate. My Spanish teacher and my English teacher took me under their wing. Incensed because my bookkeeping teacher placed me a month before graduation, my language teachers redoubled their efforts. They convinced my father and my mother that I ought to be sent to college, secured a scholarship to cover my first semester's tuition, and packed me off to the College of ——— Arts and Letters of ——— University when that department was in its infancy. There I continued my commercial training. After earning the B.S.S. and M.A. degrees, I spent an additional year in residence at ——— University studying languages.

Typewriting and Office Appliances

These skills have proved indispensable. I cut my own stencils and set up my own copy. This has meant a saving of time because I have been able to

devise trick ways to expedite the correcting of papers. Clerical work and reports—a major phase of public school teaching—do not make serious inroads on my time. Typed materials on bulletin boards are more likely to be read than the handwritten variety.

### Business Letters

This course has proved extremely useful in the teaching of English to pupils in the commercial courses. It was a course given by —————.

Accounting  
Commercial Law  
Industrial Geography  
Law Office Practice  
Mathematics  
Economics  
Public Finance  
Money and Banking

These courses have not proved particularly applicable to the teaching of English. They have served to give me the specific vocabulary associated with them. (I recall an evening school group who regarded me with awe for a whole year because the class smart-aleck failed to catch me with the word *enfeoff*.)

### Shorthand

Strangely enough, this subject has proved useful in many ways. It has provided approaches to the teaching of spelling, pronunciation, and vocabulary building. It has been my “basic” alphabet.

English Literature  
American Literature  
19th Century Poets  
Modern Poetry  
Shakespeare  
One-Act Plays  
European Drama  
Contemporary Drama  
Literary Criticism

Composition  
Advanced Grammar

Obviously, these have served admirably as background.

Spanish (Advanced)  
Commercial Spanish  
Cervantes  
Spanish Literature  
Spanish Mystics, Saints  
Spanish Dons and Rogues  
Spanish Theatre  
Spanish Novel  
Spanish Poetry

All of this work in foreign languages has proved helpful. It has served as a substitute for the Latin I never studied.

French Novel  
Seminar in revision of French grammar

Advanced Italian  
Dante

Portuguese  
Comparative Philology

Ethics  
Introduction to Philosophy  
Seminar: Kant

Good background.

Principles of Secondary Education  
Organization of the Public Schools  
Educational Psychology  
General Psychology  
Methods of Teaching Spanish

A strange mixture of good common sense and folderol. I have found them helpful.

To earn my college expenses, I worked in a shoe factory office, the office of the dean at ——— University, and in a cotton broker's office.

All this training I would not trade for a degree. I have found it possible to put through a maximum amount of work with a minimum amount of effort. I have learned to organize my own desk so that materials are available at a moment's notice. Secretarial short cuts make it possible for me to wangle leisure time that many English teachers of my acquaintance envy.

Please let me brag a paragraph. I teach every day from eight to two-thirty. I have charge of a commercial department of twelve teachers in the evening school, which meets three nights a week. I correct all my own papers (my pupils average a theme a week and a book report every two weeks). I have one hundred and twenty-five pupils who meet five times a week. I have a home room of thirty boys. I usually have some current extra-curricular activity to supervise. I take a course occasionally. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, I go out to the theatre, to dance, to bowl. I make all my own clothes. I never do any school work at home. I have time to spend with my family and with some of my friends. I see no reason why teachers — and particularly teachers of English who have so much paper work — should be chained to their desks. I recommend secretarial training!

I wish I had a course in Latin and a course in Greek.

I catch myself seizing avidly every bit of stray information about these two that chances my way. I think I could open more vocabulary doors for my pupils if I had some facility in Greek and Latin. Labored presentations of work in vocabulary are tedious; spontaneous work hits the mark more effectively. And I am afraid this spontaneity is possible only with a full background.



I wish I had a course in art and in music.

My only criteria in these fields are: I like it. I don't like it.

Surely, the teaching of English as a fine art would be greatly enhanced by a background in the sister arts.

I wish I knew how to train voices.

I am appalled at the fact that I have been at this job of teaching English for fifteen years, completely ignorant of techniques in this phase of the work.

I wish I had had a survey course in world literature.

The few parallels I have been able to draw between trends in the literature and language of England and the Continent have given the students a more critical perspective. How profitable it would be if this could be extended.

I wish I knew more about the making of moving pictures. They are the theatre of our day.

What better approach for the movie-minded boy of today to Shakespeare than through some scenarios? Maybe Shakespeare would stop being a dust-covered bust on a library shelf. (No pun intended!) Maybe the student would begin to appreciate that Shakespeare, too, had audience-actor-theatre-public opinion problems. Perhaps if we started with the theatre the boy knows, he might reach the theatre we'd like to have him know.

I began my teaching in the field of shorthand and typewriting while I was a senior in college. I just wanted some teaching experience before I was graduated. Then I taught Spanish, French, and Italian. An English class was just a filler at first. After three years of teaching foreign languages, I was shifted to the English department; and I have been there ever since. I like it. It is the key to the whole program of the student. It offers a new challenge every day. How any one can be trained to meet that challenge I do not know. After all, one meets a situation with whatever equipment one has.



















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